

In 1924, many areas in Kashmir imbued with the spirit of the Akali movement. In weekly meetings, which were held within the Gurudwaras, the speakers began to criticize the government openly. In one such meeting, on 2 March 1924, Kanhaya Singh, who was a member of Sikh Sahaik Sabha Kashmir<sup>14</sup>, read out an extract from a Gurmukhi paper, which, rendered into English, meant that 'the British government had inflicted innumerable hardships on the Sikh religion which they had endured calmly so far, but now they had passed their endurance and the government should therefore, better retire now'. He also prayed for the destruction of the British government in which he was joined by the whole audience.<sup>15</sup> The Sikh were becoming restive and conscious of their rights. So the district magistrate was asked by the state government to administer a stern warning against the speakers. The government declared all those Sikhs rebels, who, whether by word or deed or by any other means, showed favour to Akalis. Orders were issued by the Darbar for their expulsion from state.<sup>16</sup>

Not only that but the recruitment of Sikhs in the Indian army was entirely closed in the villages which had taken active part in the Akali movement or were connected with the Akali organizations. Orders were issued that the office bearers of any *Anjuman*, society or *sabha* were to be held responsible for deterring such persons from indulging in objectionable speeches in the *Anjuman* or society concerned.<sup>17</sup> Besides, the Darbar placed restrictions over public processions and public meetings, and an action was taken against some leaders under Section 107 of the Criminal Procedure Code, for taking a leading part in Akali activities in the state, while some others were expelled from the state.<sup>18</sup> In spite of such measures taken by the government, the Sikhs of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the Akalis among them, did not stop holding meetings and delivering speeches. The Sunday meetings were made the occasion for the delivery of diatribes against the oppression of the Sikhs in British India. Resolutions were passed closing with their bid to overthrow the British government.<sup>19</sup>

On 10 November 1924, a religious procession was taken out by the Sikhs in Srinagar on the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev. But the procession was stopped by the police and 20 Sikhs were arrested, and four Sikhs carrying the *Guru Granth Sahib* were handcuffed. Thereupon, the women joined the procession that moved through the major streets of Srinagar.<sup>20</sup> One of the Akali leaders, Prem Singh, a member of the committee known as Dusht Daman Jatha<sup>21</sup>, incited the processionists to take out the procession again, reciting religious hymns in defiance of the law.<sup>22</sup> Sardar Prem Singh was the moving spirit behind organizing the Jatha Bandi of the Akalis in Kashmir. The arrested Sikhs were put on trial and judgment was pronounced against them on 11 December 1924, after which they were sent to the Central Jail, Srinagar. Protesting against the sentence, some members of the Sikh Sahaik Sabha delivered short speeches near the court compound inviting an audience that consisted about 2,000 Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs to follow their example and to celebrate their festivals according to their religious principles without subjecting themselves to any restrictions imposed by the state.<sup>23</sup> Leaders of other communities assured the audience that they were prepared to follow in the foot prints of the Sikhs.<sup>24</sup>

### Sikh Gurudwara Act

Gurudwara reform became the major agent of mobilization of Sikhs all over the subcontinent. In view of the growing unrest among the Sikhs masses, the Punjab government showed its interest in solving the outstanding disputes.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, it suggested to the government of India to form a committee to examine the Gurudwara question and other kindred questions. After a fairly long discussion between the government of India and the secretary of state for India, it was decided to constitute a committee to review the whole Gurudwara question under the presidentship of General Birdwood, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Northern Command.<sup>26</sup>

After a great deal of discussion between William Birdwood and HD Craik, the Chief Secretary of the Punjab Government, on the one side, and Sardar Jodh Singh and Sardar Narayan Singh, the elected Sikh members from the Punjab Legislative Council, on the other, an agreement was reached on the Gurudwara question.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, the Sikh Gurudwara Bill was introduced in the Punjab Legislative Assembly. The Bill met all the Akali demands and was passed into a law in 1925.<sup>28</sup> The Sikh Gurudwara Act placed the entire control and management of all historical Sikh shrines under the elected body, Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. It also provided for the setting up of a tribunal which was to determine cases of disputed shrines and properties. Thus, with the advent of the Gurudwara Act in Punjab, the Akali movement came to an end. But the movement successfully achieved its initial goal.

## II

### **Political Movement in Kashmir and Participation of Sikhs**

The social reform movement led by various organizations of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs formed the basis of the struggle for freedom in Jammu and Kashmir. Quest for socio-religious reforms led to a wider and deeper understanding of social backwardness, economic stagnation and political isolation which in turn exposed the colonial interests of the British. These reform movements laid down the basis of the struggle against the Dogra rulers and the British.

After 1925, the religious organizations of Sikhs jumped into politics and joined the Muslim nationalists, and as a result, anti-British and anti-Maharaja Movement gained momentum. Sikhs realized that the nationalist movement launched by the majority community (Muslims) expressed the inner urge of the downtrodden, tyrannized and suppressed millions under the autocratic alien rule.<sup>29</sup> They also felt that it would be suicidal to oppose it and instead of showing any

hostility towards it, it was the paramount duty of all the people of the state to support it and contribute their untenable share and make it successful. The Akali movement had already brought Sikhs into the vortex of active politics in Kashmir. Moreover, they were also influenced by the prevailing atmosphere in the rest of the country. The episodes of Kamagatha Maru, Jallianwalla Bagh, Rowlatt Act, Gandhiji's slogan of khadi use and the Non-Cooperation Movement brought them much closer to the stream of national politics. Various conventions were held from time to time. In these conventions, historical resolutions against British imperialism, slogan of total independence, boycott of foreign goods and removal of untouchability were passed.<sup>30</sup> Sikhs also criticized the Amritsar Treaty under which the entire human population along with its rivers and mountains was purchased through treacherous means, with which Dogras destroyed the Sikh kingdom of Lahore.<sup>31</sup> Although fewer in number, the Sikhs of Kashmir always availed an opportunity to cooperate with the people of other religious and regional communities in the state to overthrow the autocratic rule from the state.

While everything seems to be conspiring to give the Kashmir struggle for freedom a communal line, it must be said to the credit of the Muslim leaders of this movement and also the Kashmiri Hindus and Sikhs that they saw the right side of the picture and decided to support the Muslim Conference movement. The foremost non-Muslims who came out in support of the ideals of the conference were Prem Nath Bazaz and Sardar Budh Singh, an Akali activist who popularized the ideal of secular politics and fought for the establishment of a responsible government in the state.<sup>32</sup> Budh Singh played an important role in politicizing and strengthening of community consciousness among Sikhs. He was a Sikh revolutionary from Jammu region who was actively associated with the new resurgence, and who gave it direction and later played a memorable role in the freedom struggle till its elimination in the war of resilience against the invaders from Pakistan in 1947.

In the summer of 1938 and 1939, the political atmosphere in the Kashmir was changing rapidly. On 28 June 1938, the working

committee of the Muslim Conference met at Srinagar and passed a resolution recommending to the general council to allow all people to become its members irrespective of their caste, creed or religion. Among the signatories were Sheikh Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, GM Sadiq, Jia Lal Kilam, Shyam Lal Saraf and Sardar Budh Singh. In 1939, Muslim Conference was changed to National Conference.

In the political movement of 30s and 40s, Sardar Budh Singh, an eminent Sikh leader, had a very important role to play. When formation of National Conference was in progress, he contributed through suggestions and opinion for its constitution and objectives. He was the man who insisted on giving the organization (NC) a flag, a symbol which, according to him, represents the peasantry, the labourers, and the poor and exploited people.<sup>33</sup>

The Quit India Movement launched by Indian National Congress in 1942, which resulted in the arrest of the leaders of the Congress and the consequent turmoil, deeply moved the politically-awakened people of the state. In the same year, Sardar Budh Singh delivered two speeches in Srinagar for which action was taken against him under Section 108 of CrPC.<sup>34</sup> In 1947, when the state was raided by the Pakistan tribals, Budh Singh again came to the rescue of the people and National Conference leadership. He was included in the first ministry formed under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and remained in charge of various ministries.

### III

The later days of 1947 remained a period of turmoil for the Sikhs. They were uprooted from their homes and were living miserably as refugees. The summer of 1948 was also a period of unrest and uncertainties. Economic distress and uncertain future gripped them. Absence of proper leadership added to their miseries. The Chief Khalsa Dewan and Akali Dal, the two main political organizations, were nowhere, as most of their top leaders had already been killed, thus forming a vacuum.

In the year 1957, All India Annual Akali Conference was held in Srinagar. Many prominent leaders of Shiromani Akali Dal attended it. The Akali Conference provided a big boost for the morale of the Kashmiri Sikhs. Prime Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad assured the Akali leadership that he would help uplift the Sikhs. He fulfilled his promise and provided route permits to many Sikhs for transport business. However, majority of Sikhs had agricultural background and a few were in government jobs.

After 1950, the politico-religious parties of the Sikhs helped in sharpening the separate identity of Sikhs and considered its primary duty to inculcate among the Sikhs religious fervour and pride in their rich religious heritage. Appropriate steps had also been taken to maintain Gurudwara buildings in proper condition and for the enactment of Gurudwara Act with the view to introduce improvements in the management of the Gurudwaras. The Gurudwaras in Kashmir were although managed by separate committees but no proper elections with this regard had ever taken place. In the year 1973, the Jammu and Kashmir Gurudwara and Religious Endowment Act was enacted. This could become possible due to the tireless efforts of S Surinder Singh. He was elected member of the Legislative Assembly from Tangmarg constituency in 1967 and 1972 elections. But he passed away before he could see the implementation of the Act. First election of Gurudwara Parbandhak Board was held in 1975 on party basis between Akali Dal and the newly-formed Khalsa Panthak Party. However, the latter won and formed the first Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, which was a major landmark for the Sikhs. The Akali Dal, on seeing the emergence of Panthak Party, reorganized itself which had a definite impact and made the Sikhs conscious of their rights.

Despite the close coordination between the Sikh leaders and the Kashmiri leadership, the Sikhs were not very visible in the post-Independence politics of Kashmir. From 1952 to 2008, only five Kashmiri Sikhs could get into the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council. Rarely one could see a Sikh from Kashmir as a part of the government. The only Kashmiri Sikhs to have remained associated

with the government included S Harbans Singh Azad and Dr Harbhajan Singh. They held the position of minister at one time or the other. Another Sikh leader, HS Bali, was the chairman of the Legislative Council.

#### IV

The Sikhs of Kashmir have been quite integrated into the society of Kashmir and perceive themselves as a distinct group—Kashmiri Sikhs. The locale of Kashmir is very much a part of their identity. In many ways, they have imbibed the Kashmiri culture and though having a distinct language (Punjabi dialect), they are quite proficient in Kashmiri language. Due to their cultural integration, the Sikhs have not felt as 'outsiders' and have had smooth relationship with the majority community of Kashmir, the Kashmiri Muslims.

The social integration of the Sikhs in the society of Kashmir was further enhanced due to their close political affiliation with the political movement of 30s and 40s. The secularization of the politics of Kashmir during that point of time helped in such integration. Under the leadership of Sheikh, *Kashmiriyat* became the official ideology which was defined in terms of the secular ethos of Kashmir and smooth inter-community relations. During the time of the tribal raid in 1947, he had given the call of common brotherhood in the fight against the 'outsiders'. The popular slogan of the time was *Sher-e-Kashmir ka kya Irshad? Hindu-Muslim-Sikh Itihad*. (What does Sheikh Abdullah, the Lion of Kashmir say? Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity).

Till the outbreak of militancy in 1989, the inter-community relationship between the Sikhs and the Muslims did not witness any tension. Being an enterprising community, the economic position of the Sikhs improved and one could perceive their overall mobility and presence in varied fields of Kashmir's society. Though they were concentrated in certain areas, however, they were settled in different parts of Kashmir—living amongst the majority community and sharing the common cultural space.

In late 1989, a mass political movement began in Kashmir. It was an indigenous uprising based on Kashmiri identity. Kashmiri identity politics during the post-1947 period replicated, to a large extent, the movement politics led by the National Conference of 1940s—a syncretic and unique identity inclusive of Pandits, Muslims and Sikhs. But by 1990, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) manifesto defined its goals as complete independence for Jammu and Kashmir with a system of Islamic democracy that would safeguard minority rights.<sup>35</sup> The subtle shift in the ideological manifestation of the Kashmiri identity politics resulted in the tragic exodus of Kashmiri Pandits by 1990.

During January 1990, the city of Srinagar was jolted out of its slumber when the loud speakers of every mosque were shouting slogans of Islamic nature. Pre-recorded tapes were played over the public address system. The period 1991 to 1993 was dominated by Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and the agenda for Islamization.<sup>36</sup> Panic gripped the minorities and most of the Kashmiri Pandits left for Jammu and other places in India. Kashmiri Pandits, Punjabi and Hindu labourers, and central government Hindu employees were seen boarding taxis and buses with whatever things they could carry. The migration was not only from the city of Srinagar but also from towns and villages. Some Muslims and Sikh families also migrated but most of the Sikhs stayed back.

However, with the beginning of militancy in Kashmir, the first question that emerged for discussion was: 'Should Sikhs migrate from Kashmir?' However, this small community showed courage and determination and opted to throw their lot with the Muslims of Kashmir. Majority of them decided not to migrate as they did not want to get uprooted from their motherland. They also decided not to interfere in the movement or act against it. The age-old brotherly relationship between the Sikhs and Muslims got further strengthened during this period.<sup>37</sup>

But tragedy befell on 20 March 2000, when 35 Sikhs were brutally killed at Chattisinghpura by some unidentified gunmen just



before US President Bill Clinton's visit to India. This was for the first time that Sikh minority was targeted in the insurgency, which shocked the entire state. It had its effects throughout India and in the foreign countries especially in Canada. The question 'Should Sikhs migrate from Kashmir' assumed importance once again and was discussed and debated.<sup>38</sup> The intellectuals and think-tanks of the Sikhs inside and outside the state considered all the pros and cons of the matter and decided against the migration and undertook to rebuild the confidence building measures.<sup>39</sup>

The All Jammu and Kashmir State Akali Dal urged both India and Pakistan to quickly settle the Kashmir problem. The Press conference release issued on 27 July 2001 said, "Pakistan invitation to Prime Minister AB Vajpayee had no meaning because Kashmir issue would not allow them to proceed further on other matters." The release said that the heads of the two countries did not care for the people of Kashmir, and eradicating poverty and removal of unemployment was the last thing on their minds. Akali Dal appealed to the people of the state to maintain communal harmony and brotherhood at all costs.<sup>40</sup>

The Sikhs believe that most important settlement of Kashmir has to be an internal one among the Kashmirs in which government of India and Pakistan can play a pivotal role. There is no doubt that incidents like Chittisinghpura and Mehjoornagar massacre (where seven Sikhs were killed by unidentified gunmen on 3 February 2001) has far-reaching implication and are bound to influence Sikh psyche for a long time to come. Actually, these incidents sharpened the identity of the Sikhs as a minority community and consolidated them into a homogenous group.<sup>41</sup>

It is important to understand that absolute numbers do not matter. The Kashmiri Pandits form a very small percentage of the Valley's population; the Sikhs constitute a negligible proportion. What matters is the role—cultural, economic and political—these communities have played in the region.<sup>42</sup> Very small communities

have, in many different ways, enormously influenced the history of the region. The imprints of the Sikhs on the history and culture of Kashmir is undeniable.

After the exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits, it is only the Sikhs who provide a source of diversity in Kashmir. What remains important about the Sikhs is that despite the pressures, they have chosen not to leave Kashmir. Their decision to stay back has been appreciated by the majority community in Kashmir and their continued presence in the Valley is valued not only by the common masses but also by the separatist leadership.

## Jammu Muslims and Changing Paradigms of Identity

Lalit Gupta

The term Jammu Muslims is used here for those Muslims of the state who inhabit the Jammu division, south of the Pir Panchal, including districts of Poonch, Rajouri, Doda, Udhampur, Kathua and Jammu, non-Kashmiri Muslims of Uri, Karnah, Tirwal, and Gurez, along with Muslims in the Pakistan-administered parts of the state like Muzzafarabad, Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimber, Sadhnoti and Poonch and constitute a heterogeneous ethno-lingual group as compared to Muslims of Kashmir Valley.

The Jammu Muslims can be broadly put into four main categories. The Gujjars and Bakerwals, who are predominantly Muslim nomadic pastoralists living in parts of Poonch, Rajouri, Doda, upper reaches of Udhampur districts, parts of Kathua and Jammu districts and form the second largest ethnic group of Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir after Kashmiri Muslims.

In the second category are the Muslims of Poonch, Rajouri, Bhimber, Pakistan-administered areas such as Muzzafarabad, Mirpur, Kotli, and Pulandari. Many of them are Rajputs and Brahmins with caste names like Rathor, Manhas, Jamwal, Qureshis, Jats, etc. These

non-Kashmiri Muslims form a distinct ethno-lingual group and are called Pahari Muslims and their language also called Pahari language.

The Dogra Muslims living in the districts of Jammu, Kathua and Udhampur, and having relatives in Sialkot, Narowal, Shakargarh areas of Pakistan form the third category. They speak Dogri and Punjabi.

The fourth category is that of Kashmiri/Shirazi-speaking Muslims of Doda and Kishtwar. Being contiguous to Kashmir Valley, border of Ladakh region as well as Dogra heartland, the people of this area, apart from speaking their native tongues, also understand and speak Kashmiri, Dogri and Punjabi and Urdu.

Jammu Muslims in general share a distinct North Indian (Dogri/Pothwari/Pahari/Punjabi) cultural and linguistic identity (except those living in contiguous areas of Pir Panchal like Sabzian, Mandi in Poonch, certain areas of Doda, Kishtwar, who also speak Kashmiri along with their respective mother tongues) and collectively are larger in number than that of the Kashmiri Muslims in the state.

Due to the paucity of historical and other records, the advent of Muslims in Jammu region is traced back to the 14th Century when Timur the Lame, forced Malla Dev, the Raja of Jammu, to accept Islam. But the presence of pre-Mughal Sufi shrines like *Peer Mittha*, *Baba Roshan Shah Wali*, *Panj Peer*, *Peer Budhan Shah* in Jammu city, testifies to the fact of Muslims being already an integral part of the local society by 16th Century. The reign of Ranjit Dev, during mid-18th Century, popularly called *dar-ul-aman*—‘the period of peace’ was especially favorable for Muslims in all the 22 principalities of Duggar (including Chamba, Kangra, and Nurpur) which were consolidated by him as one political unit called Jammu Raj.

The 18th Century, which marked the waning of Mughal power in North India and advent of Afghans, also witnessed many wealthy and influential Muslims, along with hordes of artisans and traders migrating to Jammu. Some of these later held important military and official positions in the courts of many princely states of Duggar. Many of these Punjabi Muslims were sent to Kashmir to rule on behalf of Pathan, Sikh, and Dogra rulers.

During the one hundred years rule of Ghulab Singh and his heirs (1846–1947), many of the loyal Muslim subjects were granted *jagirs* along with Rajputs in different parts of the state including Kashmir.

The names of the localities in Jammu city like Mohalla Afghan, Mohalla Dalapatian, Mohalla Daru Garan, Dhakki Sirajanan, Talab Khatikan, Mohalla Ustad (named after Gaus Mohammad Khan, the teacher of Maharaja Hari Singh), Mohalla Julahka, and each having number of mosques and shrines of Sufi saints—many constructed and funded by the state—are testimony to the fact that Muslims are integral to the local social fabric. One of the prominent sites where a mosque is located along with a temple is at the Bahu Fort. This fort locates one of the most revered temples, the Kali temple, and adjacent to it is the Jahangiri Masjid. During Maharaja Partap Singh reign (1885–1925), the Ahmadiya Sect was also allowed to construct a mosque in Mast Garh locality of Jammu city.

What is peculiar about the region is the presence of large number of Sufi shrines which provide a common space for people belonging to different religions not only in the city of Jammu but also in other parts of the Jammu region, including Poonch, Kishtwar. These Sufi shrines have been a part of the cultural landscape since a long time. It is these places of worship where Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus come together to offer prayers.

While the Jama Masjid in Srinagar remained closed for 16 years during the Sikh rule, the Dogra rulers fostered the spirit of communal amity amongst their subjects by personal conduct. Their visits to the Sufis, Sufis visiting royal palaces of Mubarak Mandi in glittering palanquins, and offering Eid prayers along with Muslim subjects in the mosque are part of the local folklore and still recounted by old Muslims of Jammu. The *Urs* of *Peer Mittha*, a Sufi shrine in Jammu city, was celebrated with lot of fervour wherein people from all walks of life participated and the day was declared as public holiday till the time of Maharaja Hari Singh.

The Hindus of Jammu city and elsewhere, in keeping with the old tradition, still greet their Muslim brethren on Eid. On the occasion,

special seating arrangements are made at the Jama Masjid at Talab Khatik, Jammu for Hindus, while the Muslims offer *namaz*.

The age old social-cultural scenario changed in 1947, when the political boundary of the space known as the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, with a demographic profile comprising approximately 77 per cent Muslim, 20 per cent Hindu and 3 per cent other, mainly Sikh, acceded to the newly-formed Indian nation.

### **Background to Accession**

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the charismatic Kashmiri leader of the National Conference Movement who had campaigned for the rights of Kashmir throughout the 1930s and 1940s managed to have for Kashmir a semi-autonomous status within India, and became Kashmir's first prime minister in 1948. Though the accession of the state to India was signed by the then Maharaja but there was no doubt that it had the support of the Kashmiri leadership who preferred India over Pakistan.

The accession showed the irrelevance of the religious basis of nationalism. Even when the movement for Pakistan was being popularized on the basis of it being the 'Homeland of the Muslims', the influential Muslim groups in Jammu and Kashmir, including Sheikh Abdullah and other leaders of the National Conference, were not in favour of Pakistan. Simply because they were Muslims, they did not want to join this new nation. They were prepared to take their chances in India and test India's claims to being a secular, tolerant and inclusive republic. However, despite the rejection of Pakistan as the ultimate national choice for the Kashmiris, Pakistan continued to make claim over Kashmir and used all means including war and infiltration. While the major basis of the Pakistani claim on Kashmir is that it was a solid Muslim-majority territory, it also made the claim around the UN Security Council resolutions. These resolutions were passed in the late 1940s, after Pakistan-assisted tribal invaders entered Kashmir and a substantial part of Kashmir came under the control of

Pakistan. India took the matter to the UN Security Council. As per the resolution of the Security Council, a plebiscite or referendum should have been held throughout the territory of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir to ascertain the wishes and allegiances of the people. The plebiscite was never held. Since 1948/9, when the first India-Pakistan war over control of Jammu and Kashmir ended, Jammu and Kashmir continued to remain divided into two zones.<sup>1</sup>

That is the genesis and the crux of the Kashmir dispute; both sides had a claim to this princely state; both sides ended up with effective control over one part of the former princely state but not the whole of it. Both sides have persisted in maintaining control over its own portion and persisted in dubbing the other part as illegally occupied territory.

### **Division of State and its Impact on Muslims of Jammu**

With the end of the monarchy, a democratic set up under the stewardship of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was established. This not only saw the change in the regional balance of political power (the Jammu-based Dogra rule being replaced by Kashmir-based National Conference) but also the beginning of a kind of new socio-political process, wherein numerous ethno-cultural sub-groups in all the three regions increasingly became conscious of the changing contours of identity, be it ethnic, religious, linguistic, regional as well as local.

The Jammu Muslims, who, till 1947, were part of the ruling elite and important members of the civil society, comprising about half the population in Jammu city, suffered the agony of communal strife which was unleashed in the wake of Pakistan-sponsored *Qabaili* (tribal) raid during 1947. Large-scale massacre of Hindu minority in the parts of the state which were occupied by the Pakistan-sponsored raiders resulted into a Hindu backlash. The arrival of Hindu refugees from Mirpur, Kotli, and other areas with tales of large-scale killings generated an environment in which the traditional amity between the

communities was forgotten and Muslims, especially Gujjars, living in areas like Dansal, Bari Barahama, RS Pura, and Muslims in pockets of Udhampur district of Jammu division, were killed in large numbers. Another effected area was Reasi.<sup>2</sup>

The communal situation in 1947 caused a fear psychosis amongst the Muslims. The state also failed in assuaging the fears of the local Muslims. In any case, there existed a hiatus between the political leadership of Kashmir, now holding the power, and the Muslim leadership of Jammu. This hiatus was created by the political environment that prevailed in the state especially during a decade before Partition. Till 1930s, the Muslims of the state were united under the banner of the All Jammu and Kashmir Conference. But with the conversion of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference, the Muslims of Jammu refused to go along with the Muslims of Kashmir under the same political banner. While the National Conference, which was led by Sheikh Abdullah, started identifying mostly with the Kashmiri Muslims, the Muslim leadership of Jammu revived the Muslim Conference and also allied with the Muslim League led by Jinnah. Meanwhile, the National Conference came closer to the Indian National Congress.

It was due to the political divide between the Muslims of the two regions that the political transformation in the state did not generate a sense of security among Jammu Muslims. Even with Sheikh Abdullah and National Conference at the helm of political affairs, the general feeling of insecurity amongst the Jammu Muslims resulted in large-scale migration of Muslims. This period, therefore, saw maximum number of the Muslims of Jammu, choosing or being urged, in some cases forced to leave their villages, towns, cities to cross over to Pakistan.<sup>3</sup>

While there was an overall environment of anxiety and uncertainty leading to the mass migration of Muslims from Jammu, there was also a silver lining in those trying times. Many Jammu Muslims, after spending some time in refugee camps, returned to their respective

villages and hamlets. Even those who had crossed over to Pakistan decided to come back and start the life afresh. The return to the native culture symbolized moorings and identity albeit with permanent scars on their psyche. What psychoanalysts call as cultural memory—the imaginative basis for a sense of cultural identity. The memory is based on imagination and actual events. For instance, the stories about the violence of Partition often become fiercer and fiercer as they get orally transmitted from one generation to the next. The sense of loss, anger, and bereavement becomes a part of collective consciousness. The Jammu Muslims still carry the hurt of being the victims. This sense of victimization was furthered in new political scenario which ensued after the abdication of Maharaja Hari Singh, and taking over of the new government by Sheikh Abdullah. The Jammu Muslim elite, officers in the Jammu and Kashmir administration and army, who were loyal to the Maharaja and had not supported the National Conference, earned the permanent distrust of the Kashmiri Muslim leadership, the new ruling elite in the state after 1947.

In a classic case of dominant (read Kashmiri identity) versus minority (read non-Kashmir identity), the Jammu Muslims, despite sharing the same religious identity with Kashmiri Muslims, suddenly found no role in the new political dispensation and suffered politically as well as economically. Their sense of alienation was aggravated when they compared their position with that of those Muslims from Jammu who had crossed over to Pakistan and had maintained their privileged positions. Whether it was the position of MLAs in the newly created Assembly of Pakistan Administered Kashmir, key offices like that of the president, the prime minister, chief justice and other judges, along with all key posts in the army—all were manned by Jammu Muslims. Jammu Muslims not only dominated the political and social scene in Pakistan Administered Kashmir but also in civil and military administration in Pakistan as air marshals, army generals and vice chancellors. Though the news from across the border, that of Jammu Muslims making their mark in Pakistan and holding key positions, was received with a sense

of pride by the erstwhile elite among Jammu Muslims, yet it reminded them of their loss of privileges.

In the post 1953 scenario, the National Conference increasingly came to be viewed as a Valley-based party which did not have much space for non-Kashmiris. Like others, Jammu Muslims also felt isolated by this party. Rather than being mainstreamed within the power structure, they only got nominal representation in politics and most of them were nominated as MLAs/MPs.<sup>4</sup>

Not only at the political level but the Muslims felt neglected after the Partition at the cultural level too. At the cultural level, the Dogri-speaking Muslims felt sidelined as Devnagari was adapted as the new script by modern writers and activists of the Dogri language recognition movement. Though Urdu script was also kept as an option, but in practice, the Devnagari dominated and non-availability of Dogri books in Urdu further left Jammu Muslims in a position of disadvantage. Poets like Yasin Mohd Beig wrote in Dogri, but the number of native Muslims expressing in mother tongue Dogri dwindled day by day. Even prolific writers like Prof Zahoor-ud-Din, a native of Khaned, and Duddu Basant Garh, chose not to write in Dogri.

### **Jammu Muslim Identity in Post-Partition Period**

Despite their depleted numbers, Muslims continued to form an important part of Jammu's society. Though Jammu lost its Muslim-majority character, however, it continued to have a substantial number of Muslims. Of the six districts, there were three Muslim-majority districts. It was only in the two districts of Jammu and Kathua that Hindus had their predominant presence. Otherwise, everywhere else, Muslims had significant presence.

Despite their bitter experience during the period of Partition, the Muslims of Jammu region have moved ahead. Jammu region, because of the presence of large number of Muslims, now presents a very interesting picture of mixed society. Despite all kinds of pressures to the contrary, Jammu Muslims have been integrated with their cultural

identity, and rather than having a sharp religious identity, they now have a stronger sense of cultural identity—be it the Dogra Muslim, the Pahari Muslim or the Gujjar. It is this sense of cultural identity that prevails despite grievances against the regional elite.

The onset of militancy in the state which spilled over to Jammu in 1994, has been instrumental in changing the cultural moorings of the Muslims of Jammu. Under the fatwas from militants groups, the age-old folk rituals, music, dances, and festivals, which were a shared cultural legacy of both Hindus and Muslims, were asked to be discarded as 'profane'. With the result, singing, dancing and other forms of cultural activities amongst Muslims have dramatically declined. The folk singers are finding it difficult to carry on the traditional vocation due to decline in patronage. One can also see a shift taking place not only in the socio-cultural scenario but also in the religious and political responses of people. Though the older generations of the Jammu Muslims are staunchly holding on to the old values, the new generations are coming under the influence of the new politico-religious scenario. A reflection of the generally prevalent environment of assertion of religious identities all over the country, especially during last two decades, can be seen among the Muslims of this region. They are following new practices and putting emphasis on religious identity. Like the Hindus of north India and of Jammu region, the Jammu Muslims are following various practices to assert their Muslim identity.

The identification of Muslims of this region with the larger Islamic world is reflected in many ways. The imported architecture of mosques in Jammu hills, which is a replica of the Kashmiri mosque architecture in a space where a Naga temple also shares the common courtyard, is a new development which has its roots not in changed aesthetic and design preferences but in new socio-religious influences that are alien to the local ethos. Meanwhile, one can see the change in the concept and context of shared religious spaces. In many such changes, the state is also actively involved. One such glaring example of state intervention can be seen in the 'Auqafization' of the Sufi shrines

everywhere. The Sufi shrines, which were commonly owned by the Muslim as well as the Hindu worshippers, have been appropriated as Muslim places and therefore have come under the 'Auqaf' boards, meant to manage places of worship which are exclusively for Muslims. As a result of state intervention as well as due to the increased religious exclusiveness, the shared spaces are now being claimed as exclusively Muslim. Be it the *Peer* Baba at Satwari, Gandhi Nagar or Nau Gaja *Peer* in the heart of old Jammu city, there is visible shrinking of the worship spaces shared by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs at these shrines. The newly constructed mosques are overwhelming the humble *rojas* of Sufi saints. At some of these Sufi shrines, the traditional playing of drums by devotees after their wish has been fulfilled due to the blessing of the Sufi saint is being discouraged by the custodians. The closing down of *Takiyas* in Kashmir, the meeting points of *Sadhus* and *Darvesh*, is a living example that how the symbols of our composite and inclusive heritage have been usurped by the fundamentalist forces.

The responses of the Muslims of Jammu have not only been affected by the process of Islamization but also by the Hindu fundamentalist politics. Though much of the *Hindutva* politics that affected the northern India since 1980s left the Jammu region mostly untouched, yet it has impacted the region in the more recent period. The massive Amarnath agitation during the summer months of 2008 actually reflected the power of mobilization by the forces of *Hindutva*. Though the agitation also reflected the accumulated regional discontent, there was a definite element of mobilization of the religious sentiments of people. This period, while reflecting the consolidation of the 'regional' identity of Jammu, also defined it via the religious mode. It is, however, interesting to note that the Sangharsh Samiti, which was formed to fight for the 'land' allotted to the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board, also had included a group of Muslims. The Muslims living mostly in the vicinity of Jammu city offered their support to their Hindu brethren in the 'religious' cause. However, there were other angles to the agitation as well. The agitation also

resulted in the tension between Hindus and Muslims, and generated a sense of insecurity among the latter.

The land row, therefore, seems to have triggered a process of introspection among the Jammu Muslims. There has emerged a kind of heightened awareness within the leadership of this community to take stock of its socio-political and cultural situation in the contemporary scenario. The intellectuals within the Jammu Muslims are coming forward to organize seminars and debates so as to start a dialogue among themselves and also with other communities who share the same regional identity. Such a process may lead Jammu Muslims to not only assert and reshuffle their cultural markers, but to articulate clearly their perceived objectives of social, political and economical empowerment within the composite social mosaic of Jammu and Kashmir.

**Section III**  
**Exodus and Identity Politics of**  
**Kashmiri Pandits**



## Identity Politics of Kashmiri Pandits

Shyam Kaul

From ancient times, the hallmark of the Brahmins of Kashmir (who, during the course of their chequered history, later earned the appellation of 'Kashmiri Pandits') has been their learning, erudition and high repute as the teachers and propounders of Sanskrit learning. "Kashmir," says MA Stein (translator and commentator of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*), "always had an overproduction of intellect."<sup>1</sup> Like Banaras, it was described as the "high school of Hindu Science", by Al-Beruni, who came to India with Mahmood of Ghazni in AD 1021.

"For upwards of 2,000 years," wrote George Greisens, (Linguistic Survey of India), "Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning and from this Valley has issued masterpieces of history, romance, philosophy and fable." He further writes, "At least, one great religion, Shaivism, has found some of its most eloquent teachers on the banks of Vitasta. Some of the greatest Sanskrit poets were born and wrote in this Valley."<sup>2</sup>

It was the Kashmiri philosophers who made cardinal contribution in shaping the Mahayana School of Buddhism. They did so too in the fields of literature, aesthetics, poetry, poetics, grammar, drama,

dance, medicine, architecture, sculpture and literature of fable. As an instance, the life of Abhinav Gupta (10th Century) epitomizes the genius of Kashmir. Describing him as the "greatest figure in the history of Indian aesthetics," PNK Bamzai writes, "He made his own important formulations which raised Kashmir Shaiva philosophy to its highest level and secured for it a permanent place in the history of human thought."<sup>3</sup>

The rule of Hindu kings, which lasted till the 14th Century, was not free from its aberrations, abnormalities and vices. There were political rivalries, strifes, civil wars, court intrigues, rebellions, and conspiracies, that surfaced every now and then in the political and social life of the Valley. But what stood out most was that as far as ideas, ideologies, beliefs and faiths were concerned, there were hardly any clashes and conflicts or use of coercion, violence and persecution in such matters. Religions and religious sects coexisted without any conflict and often enjoyed royal patronage without any discrimination. Issues of controversy, if any, were generally resolved through debate and discussion, and not through any violent methods. The oppressive phenomenon of religious intolerance was not in evidence anywhere.

The kingdom of Kashmir, which KM Panikkar describes as the "involute sanctuary of Indian culture till the 14th Century", entered a new age in the later period that saw the ascendancy and beginning of the non-indigenous Muslim rule.<sup>4</sup> It stirred up an unprecedented churning in the age-old political and socio-religious systems, civilizational and cultural currents, traditional value patterns and Kashmiri society's mores and lifestyles, together with the introduction of powerful drive based on violence, force and persecution in the matters of religious faith. This pattern of governance continued till the onset of 19th Century.

It was during the 14th Century that the woeful tale of Hindus, who at that time comprised the entire population of Kashmir, started, when a youngster, Sultan Sikander, came to the throne in 1389. As he matured in years, he left no stone unturned to tyrannize his subjects,

making it impossible for them to live in Kashmir and follow their own religion and religious practices. In this fanatic frenzy, Sikander was also largely goaded on by Muslim immigrants from foreign lands, who were drawn to Kashmir in fairly large numbers.

Eminent journalist and author, MJ Akbar, describes Sikander's regime as the "first display of Islamic fundamentalist power in Kashmir, and it did neither the Valley nor Islam any good".<sup>5</sup> "Sikander", writes noted author, Prem Nath Bazaz, "is the blackest spot on the bright history of Kashmir... the anti-thesis of the great and noble culture which Kashmiris had evolved through thousands of years of their ancient history."<sup>6</sup>

One of the more tragic parts of the oppression of Hindus was its relentlessness. It did not stop with one ruler or one set of ruling regimes but persisted down the ages from Shamiri sultans of the 14th Century to the end of Afghan rule in early 19th Century. By that time, the Hindus had been reduced to a minuscule minority, the proverbial '11 families' of Brahmins, called Kashmiri Pandits.

One peculiar feature of the Muslim rule in Kashmir, which served as support and solace to victimized Hindus in times of deep distress, was that the Muslims held to their heritage of tolerance and humanistic values. They often gave shelter to their former co-religionists, when the latter were targeted and tormented, incurring the wrath of their rulers many a time. Writes historian, Dr RK Parimu, "Some Brahmins who accepted Islam as an immunity against constant dread, danger and harassment, made a singular contribution in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity."<sup>7</sup>

While the Hindus, from one era to another, fell victim to the sadistic bigotry of their rulers, the Muslims did not approve of the atrocities and excesses committed against the non-Muslims. Their voice, however, did not matter in any case. In fact, the bulk of population, comprising the peasantry, became the worst victims of economic persecution, under each regime. They were hardly ever given a chance to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Major share of their

produce, sometimes the whole of it, was taken away by the government functionaries. So much so that during Afghan and Sikh rule, the peasants often cut down their fruit-bearing trees, abandoned their agricultural lands and fled the Valley to escape heavy taxes and the inhuman treatment and excesses meted out to them by the revenue collectors. It is a paradox that even as Afghan governors subjected the Hindus to oppression, atrocities, heavy taxation, torture and death, it was the Pandits who mainly ran the administration of the government especially in the affairs pertaining to revenue and maintenance of records. Many Pandits rose to high positions in the court. In one instance, a Pandit, Nand Ram Tikoo, was elevated to the position of a minister in Kabul. At one point of time, when the king was away, and the treasury fell empty, coins were struck in the name of Nand Ram Tikoo. Obviously, the reason for this paradox was that the Afghans could not find suitable people who knew the Persian language and could run the system efficiently and who could look after revenue records and collection.

Pandits, whose destiny was penmanship, had lost no time in learning the Persian language with the advent of Muslim rule. Author of *Sufism in Kashmir*, AQ Rafiqi, writes, "Non-Muslims who discovered that their prospects of employment were likely to improve by the knowledge of Persian language, set themselves to the task of learning it."<sup>8</sup> Walter Lawerence says that it goes to the credit of the Pandits that they quickly adopted themselves to the use of Persian, in the writing of which "their descendants are now most proficient".<sup>9</sup>

It was during the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin Bud Shah (1420-1470) that a new class of Brahmins named Karkuns emerged. They were the people who learnt Persian and took up government jobs. It was their sheer intelligence, proficiency in the new language and loyalty that even their tormentors and persecutors, the Afghan governors, who, in the words of Prem Nath Bazaz, were "uncultured and incorrigible fanatics", reposed their confidence in them in running the affairs of the government.<sup>10</sup>

Writing about the Brahmins during Muslim rule, PNK Bamzai says, "The Brahmins had to face very rough times (but) they weathered the storm with their courage and faith. But this was made possible by the affection and solace they received from the general mass of the population who were Muslim." According to him, "The most potent reason, however, for their survival as a community was the preaching of the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism in Kashmir by the great hermitess Lalleswari."<sup>11</sup>

From the early 15th Century, down the ages, till the beginning of early 19th Century, the general population of Kashmir did not enjoy much happy time. But the Hindus, in particular, whose number dwindled rapidly, were selectively subjected to very harsh and discriminatory treatment—politically, socially, economically and physically—in addition to being heavily taxed for their religious identity. The excellence that they had achieved in earlier times naturally became a thing of the past. They were, almost exclusively, engaged in the battle for their survival and identity. The days of producing great works of intellect were gone too. Down the Kashmir history, from the middle of second millennium AD, the persecution syndrome had become a part of the collective psyche of Pandits. But it goes to their credit that they never succumbed to any persecution complex nor did they accept defeat, no matter how hostile their circumstances were. They moved with the times and by their tremendous capacity for adaptability to adverse conditions, they sustained their reputation for learning and penmanship, for enabling themselves to survive through their predicament. They achieved enviable proficiency in Persian when it became the official medium. In later times, they did so in case of Urdu and English language also, in tune with the demands of the changing time and change of ruling classes.

In Kashmir, the Muslims took a long time to take to modern education and when they did, it was the Pandit teachers, known for their dedication to their profession, who imparted education to Muslim children, generation after generation. This fact has been acknowledged by all leading Muslim intellectuals in Kashmir.

Incidentally, it was the Pandits, whose untiring efforts, including agitation, led to the introduction and enforcement of the state subject law that barred the recruitment of people from outside Jammu and Kashmir to the government services here. Adopted in 1927, this revolutionary measure, created much greater employment opportunities for the educated youth of the state. In the beginning, no doubt, the Pandits, being far more advanced in the field of education, derived greater benefit but, as Prem Nath Bazaz puts it, "ultimately the definition proved a boon for the members of the majority community".<sup>12</sup>

Historically speaking, the mass exodus of Pandits from Kashmir in 1989-90 has many precedents. It was only latest in the chain. It is the legacy of the Pandits from the 14th Century. However, the difference this time was that the perpetrators were not non-indigenous monarchs or their governors. The exodus this time came in the turbulent wake of the rise of the alien cult of fundamentalist terror that was unleashed on Kashmir under a master plan with wide ramifications. The perpetrators were right there, in India's neighbourhood, old hands at the art and craft of varied violence against India. Their one quenchless dream for decades had been to wrench away Kashmir from India, and for the fulfillment of this dream, they had tried every strategy and stratagem. This time, it was proxy war, through cross-border terrorism, cleverly blended with Islamic fundamentalism as the main weapon. This time the task worked out by the masterminds was to strike at the root of Kashmir's secular and pluralistic culture, and Islamize the Valley completely.

The Kashmiri Pandits, who had lived in peace for ages, along with their Muslim compatriots, were obviously the most prominent symbol of the humanistic and pluralistic character and personality of Kashmir. Naturally, therefore, they were a major hurdle in the way of the plans of the perpetrators of terror. They were made the first targets of terror; both through the word of mouth and the gun. This was done carefully and selectively.

The tragedy and trauma of Kashmiri Pandits was compounded by the general tendency in some sections of the government, politicians

and media, to see the fleeing Pandits as the 'culprit' and not as the 'victim' of his tragedy. There were many reasons for this kind of thinking. Like for instance, the fact that the political masters and mandarins in Delhi were blissfully unaware of the genesis, implications and magnitude of the eruption of terrorist violence in Kashmir.<sup>13</sup>

There appeared to be a state of total unacquaintedness in Delhi about the plans being worked out in India's neighbourhood to destabilize India with a view to separating Kashmir from it, by playing the Islamic card to lure Kashmiri youth to the path of armed violence and terror. A glimpse of the initial execution of these plans manifested itself on the night of 19 January 1990, when the air and atmosphere of Srinagar incessantly reverberated with the orchestrated chant of highly inflammatory jihadi exhortations, directed at Muslims from the loudspeakers of hundreds of mosques in the city and its suburbs. It was truly a night of terror and trepidation for the small Pandit community which could not recover from this nightmare. It was that terrifying night which set the exodus in motion.

There were many who viewed the violent turn of events in Kashmir, with a marked anti-Pandit bias, with utter disbelief. They could not come to terms with the changed reality of Kashmir. One came across a number of ludicrous allegations hurled around, imputing innocent and panic-stricken Pandits. For instance, it was said that Jagmohan had engineered the exodus of Pandits and had provided them government transport to flee the Valley. Among other obnoxious allegations was that Jagmohan had promised plots to Pandits in Jammu or that Jagmohan and Pandits had conspired together to stage the exodus in order to give a 'communal colour' to the genuine struggle of Kashmiri Muslim youth for their 'genuine rights'.

The displaced Pandits found themselves in surroundings, where barring security of life and honour, there was hardly anything in their favour. The living conditions in hurriedly improvised camps, the vagaries and extremes of tropical weather, scanty means of living, strange ailments, unknown diseases, sunstrokes, snake bites, etc., were hardships they had to face.

Among the lakhs of displaced people, there was a very large percentage of villagers from all corners of Kashmir Valley, most of whom had never before moved beyond the confines of their villages or villages in the neighborhood. They had never before experienced any climate other than that of the Valley, nor had they known the hardships and hazards of life in sun-burnt wilderness in the plains. For them, in particular, life of displacement and exile, was unmitigated misery.

In the welter of day-to-day hazards of living in totally unfamiliar physical, climatic and social environment, the apathy of the government, the indifference of most of the political parties, misleading perceptions among large sections of people about their tragedy, and indeed, the gnawing pain of exile, the Pandits did not forget to hold on fast to their destiny, the pen and ink. Even though bereft of basic amenities in tented camps and crowded rented rooms, the Pandits saw to it that the education of their children did not suffer. They saved money from the meagre government cash doles they got to arrange private tuitions for their children, many of whom would study in the light of kerosene lamps in weather-beaten tents, during earlier days.

Today, after a hard existence of 19 years in exile, the Pandits can feel genuinely proud that a whole new generation of their young boys and girls has come up, all of them educationally equipped and prepared to confidently handle the jobs they will take up in different walks of life. In fact, most of them are already busy building a bright future for themselves, their families, and their displaced community as a whole. The younger generation of Pandits is now fast spreading out, both within and outside India, to explore new avenues of lucrative careers and prosperous life. This has naturally led to new lifestyles, new relationships and new matrimonial unions. Pandit boys and girls are finding matches for themselves in other communities all over the country, from Punjab to Kerala.

Greater individual economic independence, especially among young and qualified women, has generated greater awareness of gender equality. Gone are the days when due to family and social considerations and constraints, incompatible marriages were an

unavoidable evil and had to be lived through. Now, with increasing economic independence and complete breakdown of the joint family system, incompatible marriage has become totally intolerable. This has led to divorces, which have, in recent years, touched the figure of hundreds, something unheard of 20 years ago.<sup>14</sup>

The breakdown of joint family system has had another fallout, an unfortunate one. There is a tendency to neglect, or even abandon, old parents, more often by their sons than by their daughters. The reason is not economic because the progeny of such unfortunate parents are invariably doing well. It is simply that an old parent is considered to be a burden on the family, a clear instance of deterioration of age-old moral values. There are cases in evidence when two or three sons of a parent(s) share the burden on monthly basis, shuttling them from one to another as the fixed term ends. Maltreatment of old parents is not uncommon either.

Psychiatric ailments are a new affliction which has hit both the Pandits in exile and the Muslims back in Kashmir, though for different reasons. In case of Pandits, according to experts, it is linked to the exodus from Kashmir, while in case of people in Kashmir, the problem has its roots in militancy-related atmosphere of violence.<sup>15</sup>

The new generation of Pandits, born and growing up outside Kashmir since 1990, is rapidly losing touch with its mother tongue, Kashmiri. There youngsters speak Hindi, while in Jammu Dogri is used fluently, but most of them, except those still living in camps in concentrated groups, are not used to conversing in Kashmiri and therefore cannot communicate properly in this language. Incidentally, this phenomenon is visible in Kashmir also where upper middle class Muslims encourage their children to speak in English and Hindustani, rather than in their mother tongue.

Kashmiri Pandits and their Muslim compatriots have plenty in common, especially in their community and social life. Among the most common things are their inherent liking for non-vegetarian food, their thirst for news and their penchant for gossip. Displaced Pandits have carried with them these proclivities in exile. In the matter of

non-vegetarian cuisine, for instance, one often finds exclusive Muslim preparations, like Rista and Gushtaba, being served at wedding feasts of Pandits, something which hardly ever would be done back in Kashmir. Perhaps, it is expression of the nostalgia of Pandits for everything Kashmiri that they miss in their exile. This is true of wedding celebrations also. On *Mehndi Raat*, which is the night of feasting and music both among Pandits and Muslims, the displaced Pandits hire *chhakri* singers from Kashmir for the occasion. During the wedding season, the demand is so high that the bookings of noted singers and their parties have to be made months in advance. The ambience of *Mehndi Raat* at a Pandit wedding is that of unbounded joy and festivity, in which young and old, men and women, and hosts and guests join with equal spontaneity and enthusiasm. At some weddings, the presence of Muslim friends and neighbours from Kashmir is very much noticeable. This is true of Muslim weddings in Kashmir also.

Kashmiris are highly conscious and proud of their identity. This is in spite of the fact that down the centuries of their history, they have suffered religious persecution, tyranny and murder, in case of Hindus; and extreme economic exploitation and oppression in case of Muslim peasantry, that comprised the bulk of the Valley's population. Paying a tribute to Kashmiris, Tyndale Biscoe, pioneer of modern education in Kashmir, writes of their ancestors having been "murdered, oppressed and enslaved" by foreign invaders and rulers, and adds, "It is quite possible that if we, Britishers, had to undergo what the Kashmiris have suffered in the past, we might have lost our manhood."<sup>16</sup>

Walter Lawrence says, "Kashmiris possess an individuality and national character which will cling to them where they go." He writes oppression had driven them out of the Valley but "many have come back and all are loath to leave."<sup>17</sup> Dispossessed of their home and hearth and driven out of their land of birth, by circumstances beyond their control and endurance, Pandits are now living scattered over different cities and towns, mainly in north India. But they did not get lost in the multitudes, as was likely to happen to a small community like

theirs. Wherever they live today, they live with their ethno-culture identity and their individuality fully in fact, and they assert it whenever necessary. For instance, in keeping with their destiny of penmanship, displaced Pandits have launched their journals, to make their voice heard, from different cities of India, including Jammu, Delhi, Faridabad, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore, Pune, etc. They make sure that from Delhi to Washington, their voice does not go unheard in any international forum of consequence. They see to it that their plight as exiles in their own country is taken note of and their cause is upheld.

Wherever the Pandits are now living, they strive to recreate Kashmir through the replicas of their iconic institutions back home, including their important religious shrines. In Jammu, for instance a replica of the renowned Kheer Bhawani shrine of Tulamula has come up, which is worthy of the original. In Faridabad, a rocky hillock has been transformed into the shrine of Hari Parbat in exile. The picturesque setting, beautified by the imaginative landscaping of a barren and rocky area, is something that one cannot help appreciating and admiring. It has by itself emerged as creation of exquisite religious aura, which attracts large numbers including Kashmiri and non-Kashmiri devotees and visitors. On Kashmiri Pandit festivals, like Navreh (New Year), thousands of Pandits from Faridabad, Delhi, Gurgaon and places farther away, throng the shrine, together with a large number of local people of the area.

In Jammu and Delhi, one also finds replications of many important ashrams of saints and sages of the Valley. These ashrams are crowded with devotees on particular days. Also, many temples have come up in Jammu, which have been named after the original ones in Kashmir.

It is now 19 years that Kashmiri Pandits have been living a life of displacement, dispersal and exile which is a fairly long time in life of an individual or a small ethno-religious community. One question that is often being asked is whether the younger generation of the

community, especially those born and brought up away from Kashmir, will cling on to their roots and have same craving for Kashmir as the older people have? One simple answer to this question could be given in a few words: the demand for a separate homeland for the Pandits, within Kashmir, a popular slogan in the community, draws its strength essentially from the new generation in the age group of 20-40.

The displaced Pandit is economically in a far better position today than he was as desperate and helpless fugitive when he had landed in Jammu, Delhi and other places, looking for shelter, support and means of livelihood. But recollections of his displacement never cease to haunt, torture and agonize him. One remembrance that continues to rankle in his heart, and that he often speaks about, is that when he was being made the target of terror and murderous violence, his Muslim fellow Kashmiris, in most cases, looked the other way and perceptibly refused to show understanding, fellow feeling, and concern for his predicament. In fact, there was no dearth of people who exulted in the ouster of Pandits. The entire separatist leadership who now are heard speaking that "Kashmir is incomplete without Pandits", had sealed their mouths and turned a blind eye.

Perhaps it was some such deeply etched impressions and memories, deep down in the minds of Pandits, of the winter of terror of 1989-90 that led to the erosion of Pandit's trust in his fellow Muslim Kashmiris who were, without exception, swept away by the *azadi* wave. In the subsequent days, the distrust was further sharpened by the vandalization, encroachments and forcible occupation of Pandit properties and lands scattered all over the Valley.

Perhaps it was this deeply-ingrained distrust that acted as one of the motivating reasons for the demand of a separate homeland for Kashmiri Pandits within the Valley, which has been carefully charted out. Other reasons for the homeland demand, whatsoever they may be notwithstanding, it is certainly an expression of hurt and lacerated feelings of the displaced Pandits regarding the attitude of the majority Muslims community as a whole to the exodus of Pandits during the

thick of those terrifying early days of violence, with Pandits as its chosen target.

During all these past 19 years of their exile, the Pandits have watched with dismay the lack of will, sincerity and capability on the part of the successive governments in tackling the issues of their return and rehabilitation in their land of birth. The average Pandit today is thoroughly disgusted, disillusioned and frustrated by the general atmosphere of unconcern about his plight.

In defence of their incapability, some government circles sometimes brandish the argument that Pandits are settling down outside Kashmir and that they are not keen to go back and live in Kashmir. It actually amounts to saying, "we are not interested nor capable of taking you back to your home, in security and honour, and you do not want to risk doing so on your own either. We, therefore, declare that you are not inclined to go back." The relevant question is whether the Pandit has freedom to go back en masse and live a life of security, honour and dignity in his land of ancestors? Is it safe for community to do so in the existing conditions? It is only for the government to answer these questions and find solution for them.

A glaring instance of the apathy of the government and its lack of will pertains to illegal enrichment and occupation of Pandits lands and their properties in Kashmir. The government has, so far, shown no inclination whatsoever to end this state of affairs, despite repeated pleas and representations by the affected people contrary to the government's own assurances to act in the matter. It was mainly due to this inaction and failure of the government in protecting the properties Pandits had left behind that, at one stage, a large number of them went for distress sales, all at throwaway prices. The properties that still stand are virtually in ruins and the lands are under forced occupation.

It is rightly said that the return of Kashmiri Pandits to their homes is directly linked with the attitude, response and reception of the common Muslim of Kashmir, without whose spontaneous involvement and cooperation nothing practicable and lasting can

be achieved. But the fact remains that the attitudes, utterance and action of the Muslims in Kashmir, specially the separatist leadership are largely subservient to the whims, directives and dictates of the militant organizations. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, no doubt, did take some kind of an exploratory initiative for rapprochement with the Pandits, with their ultimate objective of their return home, but nothing worthwhile came out of it. It was more or less an individual effort, with hardly any support at the base. The terrorist groups active in Kashmir, themselves subservient to alien dictates, have so far not shown any particular inclination to 'allow' the return of Pandits to Kashmir. In fact, some of them still oppose any such move and set their own conditions for it.

The average Kashmiri Muslim may not be averse to the return of the Pandits, but his attitude, keeping in view all the circumstances, is at best that of indifferent passivity. The exiled Pandit may or may not come back, it does not make a lot of difference for him, except perhaps for some selected people who lived in the close neighbourhood of Pandits, and many of whom still miss their neighbours.

A disturbing feature of the contemporary Kashmir scenario as a whole is that a whole new generation has grown or is growing up to adulthood over these past years. It is divided into two: one in the Valley and the other living in exile, beyond the tall mountains surrounding Kashmir. They are strangers to one another, with not many opportunities available to them for knowing and interacting with one another. It certainly does not augur well for the community of Kashmiris because the older generation is, sooner or later, going to make its exit. There is a feeble silver lining though. Thousands of Kashmiri Pandit and Muslim boys and girls, pursuing studies outside Jammu and Kashmir, do get ample opportunities to meet and interact together and know one another.

God had created Kashmir as a paradise on earth for humans. The Brahmins of ancient Kashmir had made it a paradise for the free play of the brilliance of the human mind. The intellectual calibre of

the Brahmins and their labour had made them the founders of a great legacy that finds few equals in the higher and finer pursuits of the human intellect. However, the current of Kashmir history took a sharp turn in the first half of the second millennium AD, and from then onwards, the Brahmins had to live through in trials and tribulations, in depleting numbers, for hundreds of years. They became the victims of the history of their own land and they have not recovered from this victimhood till date.<sup>18</sup>

It is indeed a cruel quirk of their history that even today, when the world is well on its way through the 21st Century, the Pandits of Kashmir are still engaged in a struggle for their survival as a religious and ethno-cultural community, and for their right to live in their homes in their land of birth.



## Kashmiri Hindu Identity

Pramathesh Raina

The issue of identity has vexed the politics of the subcontinent ever since the freedom struggle. The state of Jammu and Kashmir is no exception, and especially over the last 20 years, the cries have been increasing in shrillness and intensity with every passing day. Every faction considers its identity under threat. But what is unique about Jammu and Kashmir is that the larger the faction, the louder the clamour.

Identity in its basic meaning would define the traits or qualities of a person or group which make them different from others. Thus, we have our individual identities which make us all different from each other. Then there is the group identity. Group identity is based on common traits peculiar to that group. There can be any number of group identities or 'types'. However, the most commonly referred to are the religious, regional, lingual and ethnic identities. Once the splitting of identities into sub-identities starts, there is no count to the permutations and combinations that result. One fact is often forgotten but highly relevant: the identity of a group is dynamic and the rate of change is determined by the progressiveness and outlook of the group.

I will commence with an anecdote to highlight the manner in which the identity of a lay person is affected in his day-to-day life. An acquaintance of mine is employed in a showroom selling carpets in Mumbai. He is an ordinary middle class Kashmiri from the Hanjra (fisherman) community. He stays in the city along with five other persons like him, while his family stays in Srinagar, far from the corrupting influence of the big city. On his return from home after his annual holiday, I found him quite agitated. The reason: his children are speaking more English than Kashmiri. They greet each other with 'Hi' and his son calls him "Dad" (pronounced in the American way to sound more like 'dead'). "He has killed me while I am still alive. I thought they were better off in Srinagar, but I see no difference between their attitude and the children of Mumbai", was the lament. He can see the change in their values and language but can neither accept it nor identify with it.

Let us pause a while and consider the nature of the problem. A generation gap has always existed. The younger generation has always been more forward looking, impatient and amenable, at times eager for change in the existing order unlike their parents. Change is a fact of life. What is different now is the rapidity of this change which has caught most of us unprepared. The biggest catalyst for the change have been the computer and internet, which are viewed in many quarters as instruments with which the West is attempting to impose its culture on the rest of the world. This feeling of a threatened identity is universal and not restricted just to Jammu and Kashmir. Indigenous populations across the world are feeling the heat of globalization. When one accepts the inevitability of the emergence of a global village, it is but natural that many boundaries will melt and many cultures will feel the heat. The major sufferer is bound to be the weak. History has shown that only races with the ability to adapt to change will survive. Those who cling to tradition and are rigid in their approach are doomed to extinction. There is no escaping this reality. One cannot be a dinosaur in today's world.

Fortunately, this grim scenario does not appear to be applicable to the Kashmiri Pandit, whose identity has passed through so many a catharsis, that the present specimen may be unrecognizable from the original species. The Kashmiri Pandit is reputed to be a *wangun* (aubergine). The allusion to the vegetable stems from the fact that the humble aubergine can be cooked in combination with practically every meat, pulse or vegetable. Similarly, the Kashmiri Pandit can fit into any society without looking out of place. That is the secret of the survival of the Kashmiri Pandits. The first major migration in the 13th Century saw the Kashmiri Pandit population in the Valley dwindle to a few families. Phoenix-like, they once again rose to positions of prominence and influence in the ensuing years. And so shall they again.

In some ways, the history of the Kashmiri Pandits can be likened to the history of the Jews and the Parsis. Like them, the Kashmiri Pandits have, over the centuries, been migrating out of Kashmir for various reasons, primarily economic and at times religious persecution; to the extent that today there are more Kashmiri Pandits worldwide than in the land of their origin. Herein also lies the major difference. Whereas the Jews and Parsis opted to exist as a separate entity where ever they went, the Kashmiri Pandits have always been assimilated into the mainstream of their adopted land and only those who migrated within the last 250 years can still be identified as Kashmiris. While the Parsis are still scattered worldwide, it took the Holocaust, loss of six million lives and the combined might of the Allies to get the Jews back to the land of their ancestors. Hopefully, the Kashmiri Pandits will not have to pay such a heavy price for their return.

Who is a typical Kashmiri Pandit? Is he the venerable sage who compiles the almanac, still dons the *pheran* and is one of only a handful who can still read and write Sharda, the script of our forebears? Or is he the average man in the street, who prefers to wear western clothes, would rather educate his children in an English medium school, and achieve the best he can wherever his job takes him? Or is he a person like Jawaharlal Nehru—whose ancestors left the Valley in the 18th

Century—who could not speak Kashmiri, but was immensely proud of his heritage? Or is it a person like my daughter, born of a non-Kashmiri mother, does not speak the language, yet for years, happily affixed the label “Proud to be a Kashmiri” on her school bag? There is considerable difference between the four persons described, all as different from each other as chalk from cheese; yet they share the same label, the Kashmiri Pandit. No region or people can lay claim to a distinctly typical identity. For every type, you will find an exception. And not just amongst the Hindus. Can one bracket an individual like Omar Abdullah with a typical *shikara wala* or a peasant working in the fields? Yet, who can question that they are all Kashmiri Muslims?

Semantics about the term ‘identity’ has given rise to many connotations regarding its meaning. It has variously been interpreted as the representation of a stereotype, the representation by religion and representation by region. It is incorrect to straight-jacket communities into stereotypes. The words of Franz Kafka, himself a Jew, are relevant, “What do I have in common with the Jews when I have nothing in common with myself?” Today, identity is mostly being used to convey a sense of loss and insecurity. Every issue is linked in some way or other to a ‘crisis of identity’. For some, the presence of security forces threatens their ‘Kashmiri’ identity; for others, migration of the Kashmiri Pandits threatens their identity; domination by the Valley-based political parties threatens the identity of the people of the less populated regions of the state; mindless violence and killings threaten *Kashmiriyat*, and so on. Every clan seems to find its identity under siege.

I do not subscribe to this line of thought. Personally, I do not suffer so much from a loss of identity as from a loss of roots. I am who I am, no matter where I am, but if I cannot go back to where I belong, that is unacceptable. For me, my identity stems less from my religion and more from my region and language. I seem to relate more easily with a Kashmiri Muslim than a Hindu from outside the Valley. Similarly, I find it difficult to believe that a Kashmiri Muslim would be more comfortable with a Punjabi Muslim than with me. Home will always be across the Banihal Pass. The sight of the peasant in a

*pheran* and pointed cap, the sloping tin sheet or shingle roofs, the *dab* (over-hanging balconies), the poplar and the chinar trees, the *dongas* (houseboats) on the river, all herald the arrival home.

Within this unique Valley, each person had his own inviolable space. Our house and the madrasa run by Lassa Baba, existed side by side. Across the lane was the ashram of Pandit Ramjoo. Standing in the centre of the street, one could hear sounds merging into each other, quite like a stereo system with the left speaker playing the sound of Lassa Baba reciting the verses of the *Holy Qur'an* to his students who would repeat the verses till he was satisfied they had got it right, while the right speaker would resonate with the sound of *bhajans* being sung with tuneless but full-throated devotion. In the same lane was the butcher's shop, above whom stayed the *warin* (mid-wife), who never let go an opportunity to chide me and remind me that my father was born of her hands. Across the lane was another Hindu house, next to which was the *goor* (milkman) from where we got our milk and curds. It carried on thus. Every seventh or eighth Muslim household was interspersed with a Hindu one. People of all communities, from the scavenger folk to the fisher folk, the baker, the trader, the learned one, the affluent, the abjectly poor, all existed cheek by jowl. No one resented anyone. There were no secrets and every one knew what went on in the next house. Though I must confess, we all felt superior to each other. ‘We’ were the intellectuals and ‘they’ were uneducated and ignorant. For ‘them’, ‘we’ were *dabyas*, incapable of any productive work, and therefore a useless entity. The point is that no one felt inferior or cowed down by the other. Ever so often, I would get into a brawl with some urchins and the fight would be broken up by the *warin* who would admonish me for getting involved with riff-raff.

If I have a Hindu identity which is so distinct from the Muslim identity, then what happened to the concept of *Kashmiriyat*? After all, the average Kashmiri Muslim is not of imported stock. Most are converts, some as recent as a few generations ago. Some have not even felt it necessary to change their surnames which betray their Hindu origin. It is precisely this common heritage which gave rise to the

tolerance that characterizes *Kashmiriyat*. Do I have a purely Kashmiri Hindu identity? I wonder! Very few of my childhood memories are exclusively Hindu. When we cremated my great-grandfather, the *kavij* who assisted at the funeral pyre was a Muslim. The butcher, the milkman, the green grocer were all Muslims. I can recall my revered grandfather sitting at his window overlooking the butcher's shop across the street. The butcher was a handsome blue-eyed fellow. I do not remember his name but he was universally known as '*haji puji*' (Haji butcher); whether in recognition of the pilgrimage or his distinguished looks, I do not know. He would invariably sing while mincing mutton, drumming a tattoo with the cleaver on the mince board and varying the beat according to song and mood. Most of the songs had Hindu references. I recollect an incident when he and my grandfather argued about the meaning of a stanza containing the words, '*Tsui ay Shiv ta Naraan kus*' (if You are Shiva, then who is Narayan?), and he was able to hold his own with the old man. This was an everyday affair and for me a good example of *Kashmiriyat*, wherein you have a learned and venerable Pandit and a Muslim butcher able to rise above the mundane and argue knowledgeably on topics other than the weather and rising prices.

I was a helpless witness to the dislocation of the Kashmiri Pandits during the fateful period of 1989–90. It was heart-rending to see the young, the old and infirm, packed like sardines along with whatever meagre possessions they could gather hastily, crammed for space in the back of a lorry bound for an unknown destination, anywhere, so long as it was across the Banihal. That is what fear does to the ordinary man. An atmosphere of distrust prevailed. There was an absolute breakdown of trust and faith in the government machinery. Leadership within the community was totally lacking. Such was the wide-spread paranoia that residents of a *mohalla* (locality) fled overnight without informing even their closest neighbour, causing more panic, ultimately spurring the exodus. During that period, I pleaded with my kith and kin not to flee the Valley, because once out, it would be very difficult to return.

I even suggested cramming into the military areas along the national highway till sanity was restored, but there was no organization or leader strong enough to take charge of the situation and rally the community around him. Images of the confused and frightened looks on the faces of people, especially those fleeing from the villages, will remain etched in my memory forever. There is enough written about that period. Every writer has his or her views on why it happened and who must share the blame. I, for one, am convinced that if the community had an enlightened leadership around which they could rally, our history would have charted a different course.

An incident which occurred in the autumn of 2005 is worth mention. My father was invited by Kashmir University to participate in a writer's workshop. He expressed a desire to visit our ancestral house in Fateh Kadal which was promptly arranged. It turned out to be quite an emotional and traumatic experience. None of the young neighbours recognized him and one or two even asked him whether he had come to sell the house. While he was touring the house, a crowd of sorts had gathered. As he emerged an old lady recognized him and screamed, '*Hai, yi ha chhu Nathji*' (Oh! That's Nathji). That triggered pandemonium and led to considerable breast-beating and weeping. He, too, broke down. It was a public outpouring of grief and self-recrimination on part of our erstwhile neighbours that they had stood by and watched helplessly as their Hindu brethren fled, one by one. It took a while for sanity to be restored. Every one implored him to return. Every body wanted him to visit their home and join them in at least a cup of tea, if not a meal. Even today, he breaks down when he recollects the events of that day. A concerned friend who was witness to his plight was upset with me for having encouraged him to go home on his own—suppose something had happened to him? My response was typically inelegant and insensitive, 'I'm sure he would have felt blessed if he had met his Maker in the house he was born!' He returned from Srinagar with his soul purged and not a trace of rancour over what transpired in 1989–90. He now refuses

to condemn any particular person and terms the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits as the result of a series of unplanned and unfortunate incidents which snow-balled into a catastrophe, the proportion of which even the perpetrators of the mayhem had not imagined.

The average resident of a migrant camp may not agree with these views. But it is worth reiterating here that it is not loss of identity but loss of home that constantly haunts him. There has always been a steady flow of Kashmiri Pandits out of the Valley, but it was mostly for economic betterment; but the thought that one may never return never crossed one's mind. But when one has to leave one's home and hearth out of fear, the feeling of bitterness and betrayal is intense.

What lies ahead? What must be done to alleviate the Kashmiri Pandit's sense of loss and what measures can be adopted to facilitate his return? These are questions that are easy to ask but have defied a satisfactory answer so far. Before one jumps to a populist or sloganeering solution, it would be worthwhile to study the type of persons who are still resident in the camps. An analysis would reveal that they are largely from the rural stock. These are the Kashmiri Pandits who may have been well-off but not well-educated and mostly earned their living from agriculture or horticulture. This fact is the main reason why they have not been able to readjust to the change in location as quickly as their city-bred cousins who were comparatively better educated and adaptable and able to secure alternate employment with relative ease. Failure to take cognizance of this basic fact will result in the implementation of a myopic policy of making bigger camps with better amenities. How does it make a substantial difference to the occupant of a one-room tenement if he is shifted to a two-room tenement in Jammu province or even in the Valley? The fact remains that he will be unable to survive on his own and despite the best intentions of the government, the individual will still remain dependent on dole. The aim should be to restore to the individual the comfort zone of his original lifestyle. A teacher would like to get back to teaching, a clerk to his office and, by the same logic, a farmer to his lands.

Given the present conditions and the apprehensions of the Kashmiri Pandit of becoming a vulnerable target again, it is impossible to get the community to agree to return to their former homes. Nor would it be a practical step, as there are bound to be a number of pre-conditions imposed on the government by the leaders of the community, the prime one being guarantee of personal safety, which no government will be in a position to ensure across the length and breadth of the Valley. It is easier to centralize them, not in a ghetto, but in a village where they can be restored to their former lifestyle. The essentials of the plan are explained in the succeeding paragraphs.

A large tract of land must be acquired. The size of the area should be at least 2,000 acres. The present owners of the lands should be offered the option of accepting a generous compensation or land of equal value elsewhere, in case they are not comfortable with the idea of getting assimilated in the new village. This is designated as a model village and planned on modern lines. The village should be made self-sustaining in every way. There should be no individual ownership of land and all the residents must be shareholders. The number of shares per individual can be determined by the amount of land possessed formerly by him. However, the tenement should belong to the resident. The income generated from agriculture should be distributed amongst the residents. All adults should have an equal stake and the community should be administered on democratic lines by an elected body. This proposal will have to be implemented initially as a joint venture between the government and the public, as the former would need to identify and allocate the land. They can be assisted by the leaders of the community in the implementation of the plan once it finds favour.

The advantages of this proposal are many. First and foremost, it restores the Kashmiri Pandits back to their homeland, though not to their original homes. Second, security is less of an issue since there is safety in numbers. Third, those from the agricultural background can be restored to their former livelihood. Last, but not least, for those

who fear that the identity of the community is in danger, presence in the Valley of a substantial number of Kashmiri Pandits is a good way of safe-guarding their identity. The ideal location for this village would be a large tract of land to include the village of Martan and the ruins of Martand. There is a symbolic relevance in that the resurgence of the community can commence from the ashes of the Sun Temple, the very place from where it went into decline.

This village can be developed into the repository of values and traditions of the Kashmiri Pandit community while still retaining a secular outlook. From here, persons can fan out to the rest of the Valley and even to their former homes once they are confident of making it on their own. This entire process is bound to take time, probably a decade or so. But the transmigration can be achieved within a year once the proposal finds political and public acceptance.

The core strength of the Kashmiri Pandit community is in the field of education and this should not be lost sight of. In addition to agriculture, a multi-discipline university can be developed in the village. There can be a tie-up with any number of educational institutions in India and abroad who would be willing to finance the venture. This will create a number of job opportunities, preference for which should go to the locals and the displaced Kashmiri Pandits. The community can also organize regular training camps of two to three weeks' duration. Apart from treks and outdoor activities, the curriculum could also include classes on history, religion, traditions, language, and leadership. This course would be open to everyone and would be of immense value for Kashmiri youth worldwide to rediscover their roots and heritage.

At first, this concept may appear to be too idealistic and simplistic. That is because it has been deliberately been so worded to attract public attention and acceptance. One must consider the problem facing the administration. There is a large section of Kashmiri society which has been displaced from their homes for almost two decades. This section is highly vocal, erudite, influential and has worldwide reach. This problem can neither be wished away nor swept under the carpet

for long. Return of this section to the Valley is high on the priority of every politician, if one is to believe their public pronouncements. Migrant camps cannot exist for ever. Exchanging one camp for another is not an acceptable solution, but exchanging a home for another with a similar former lifestyle, definitely is. The inmates of the migrant camps should not have any reservation in accepting it.

There is technically no hurdle for the government to acquire land. There are enough provisions in law. States are constantly acquiring lands for SEZs (Special Economic Zones), military installations, airports, etc. Acquiring a decent-sized tract of land in an area of limited commercial importance should not pose an insurmountable challenge for a determined government. If one were to weigh the publicity and goodwill gains for the government in successfully restoring the Kashmiri Pandits back to their homeland, it would prove to be a win-win situation.

There are many other options before the government to encourage Kashmiri Pandits to return to their homeland. A few measures that can be implemented are mentioned below:

- Increased reservations for Kashmiri Pandits for jobs and in professional colleges for students. States like Maharashtra and Karnataka have a substantial percentage of reservations for Kashmiri migrants. There is no reason why Jammu and Kashmir cannot follow suit in equal or larger measure. Increasing the quota may encourage some parents to return to their former homes.
- Preference and subsidy in setting up small and medium scale industry will encourage technically qualified Kashmiri Pandits to return and set up industrial units of the appropriate technology which are required in the state.
- Organize an annual World Kashmiri Forum on the same lines as the Pravasi Bharati Diwas or the World Punjabi Conference which is held every year in Lahore. Punjabis the world over, regardless of nationality and religion, can attend this confer-

ence. Similarly, Kashmiris cutting across borders and religion can attend the conference and exchange views on various subjects. Such exchanges will spread awareness of the changed scenario in Jammu and Kashmir and may even encourage a few to return to their roots.

Kashmiri society has always stood on two pillars—the Kashmir Muslim and the Kashmiri Pandit. The latter can certainly not survive without the former, but once before in history, some segments of the former mistakenly thought that the Kashmiri Pandits were irrelevant and could be dispensed with. History proved them wrong, and years later, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin was constrained to send a delegation to fetch the Kashmiri Pandits back to save the Valley from anarchy. History repeated itself in 1989 and the majority of the Kashmiri Pandits are homeless once again. But is it all over for us now? I should certainly not think so. All we need is an enlightened and resolute leadership. The Kashmiri Pandit once again requires Bud Shah!

15

## The Conundrum of Identity

Badri Raina

*'Puchhte haen woh ke Ghalib kaon hae?  
koi batlao ke hum batlaen kya.'*

'Ghalib, what are you just who?'  
They ask of me today;  
Pray help and tell me,  
After all, whatever shall I say?'<sup>1</sup>

What better than that bewildered poser from the poet to suggest something of the intractable, if not altogether inscrutable, nature of human identities. As the most intrepid researchers have often found, even among communities that seem readily amenable to homogenized formulation, the smallest hamlet can offer befuddling challenges to the systematizing project.

To the extent (often a very large extent indeed), nonetheless, that the accretion and distribution of social, and all concomitant, forms of power impinge on competing claims or authorized definitions of individual and group identity—in any variety of state and polity, one might add, perspectives and procedures available at any given point of

time must continue to receive informed scrutiny. Not that 'informed scrutiny' can ever remain above and beyond historical controversy and contestation, being embedded, like all other constructs, in the concrete interests of plurality. More than some ready-at-hand instrumentality, 'informed scrutiny' may functionally be understood as that high point of objectivity which the larger enterprise of humanist advance makes accessible to the honestly hard-working subject. Nor may such scrutiny always expect to enjoy long life, since the Hiesenberg principle operates as much within the dynamics of human push and shove as in our study of particles.

There seem broadly two contrasting discourses that tend to be employed in reflections upon identity—an essentialist (in the Hegelian sense of the term) and an existentialist one. Having said that, I may at once stipulate that these, as well as other, approaches to cognition of identity make sense only in relation to the particular social order within which individuals and communities strive for meanings. Let it also be said that, before we know, the essentialist can congeal into the existentialist, and the existentialist finds avenues of mobility that had not been contemplated.

Be that as it may, let me stay for a moment with the stipulation about particular social orders. It seems plausible to generalize that individuals and groups tend to be minimally self-conscious about identity within social orders that are, by and large, open and dynamic, and wherein the institutions of state and society have learnt to internalize a culture of humanist and lawful equity. It is when that culture begins to become suspect that identities acquire an urgency of assertion which, yet again, can be pressed either to subvert the social contract or enrich it beyond its staid wisdoms.

If I may quickly amplify: those sections of the polity in India, who today vociferously resist and decry affirmative action programmes, miss the point that the need to address group identities arises precisely because the grounding principles of republicanism, over which they have presided for decades, have suffered breaches which they have failed to attend to in consonance with the claims of humanism and

equity. Those at the receiving end of those breaches clearly can meet that failure in one of two ways—a direct armed challenge to the state whose legitimating bases have been compromised, or through mass actions along a diversity of axes. Inevitably, in a situation wherein class identities remain enfeebled and vitiated, such mass actions cannot but take recourse to alternate forms of social cohesion. And, where a debilitated state will seek to draw sectarian opportunity from such cohesions, a more enlightened one may well-incorporate them in creative ways to enrich the participatory skein of democracy.

In the meanwhile, privileged sections whose concrete interests enjoin resistance to amplifications of the democratic ideal deploy strategies, besides a straightforward use of state apparatus, which contradict the history of their own becoming. Consider that many students and teachers of history among the anti-reservationists approve of the critique that Edward Said offers of 'orientalist' stereotyping of identities engaged in by erstwhile western colonial metropolitans in order to prepare the ideological grounds for the colonizing enterprise. Having once fixed the Arabs and the Asiatics into existential identities (lustful, irrational, violent, wily), the 'civilizing mission' could be sold as a benediction. Remember that Churchill thought Indians (mainly Brahmins at the time, since the lower *varnas* were hardly in any reckoning at the time) incapable of self-rule.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, how trenchant the irony that the progeny of those metropolitan Indians, who then contested the Churchillian thesis, find it uncritically convenient today to replicate the 'orientalist' argument as they seek to construct some two-thirds of the polity into 'non-meritorious' segments, who may not be trusted to deliver in institutions of higher proficiency. Out on the streets, broom in hand, they claim to refuse casteist identity by first making an ugly show of their own casteist subjectivities. As suggested at the outset, how else can these identity contests be understood but within the ongoing formation of power-relations? If I may venture in passing: in foregrounding the type of the 'argumentative Indian' as exemplifying long traditions of democratic culture in pre-colonial India, Amaratya



Sen may, in fact, be somewhat guilty of a similar 'orientalist' overreach. The 'argumentative Indian' of yesteryears, after all, was, for the most part, male of the species and upper caste to boot. It must remain a question whether his democratic/dissenting predilections ever stretched to interrogating the confinement of those predilections to an elite that seemed always reluctant to extend the principles of concrete emancipation and equality to the majority of Indians.<sup>3</sup>

## II

It is demonstrably the case that group identities even at their most cohesive consolidation are never monoliths of opinion or preference, but always riven with internal debate and dissent. Beleaguered as they might be much of the time, Indian Muslims never express their electoral choice en masse, nor do Kashmiri Muslims have just a single perspective either on the future of the Valley or of its relation with India and Pakistan. Driven to existential despair, not all diasporic Pandits favour a sequestered 'homeland'. Nor do all Yadavs ever vote just for Lalu Prasad, or Dalits for Mayawati. Furthermore, the self-perceptions of groups, that in existential moments close around uni-dimensional identities, suffer as much diachronic ravage, either in anticipation of or in response to the shifting contexts of the totality within which they live out their destinies, as much as any single historical subject.

As Amartya Sen has, less controversially this time, recently underlined, individual subjects are always a conglomerate of identities—facets which are either subdued or foregrounded in diverse contexts of inter-subjective or collective transaction. It is the project of authoritarian politics to reduce the multiple features of identity to one single feature, chiefly either a religious reference or a nationalist one.<sup>4</sup>

## III

Let me, without apology, illustrate this by alluding to what I understand of my own subjectivity. Composed as it is of discrete involvements/commitments, either in success or failure (teacher of English, literary

critic, freelance journalist, lover of Urdu and translator of Ghalib, political Leftist, social activist, erstwhile Ranji Trophy cricketer and corporate executive, accomplished bathroom singer, animal lover, metropolitan citizen but in kurta and pyjama, increasingly more comfortable in spoken Hindustani than urbane English), let me skirt all these and examine that one other feature that at the present time seems more of interest to the project of this book than any other, namely, religious affiliation.

Am I conscious of consequences that flow from having been born into a Hindu household? Yes, I am. But having said that, I am also deeply aware that I internalize a Kashmiri Hinduism which is as often revolted by Gangetic forms and practices of the faith as by the most brainless Christian Evangelism or Wahabi political Islam; feeling far closer to a composite Kashmiri spiritualism than to anything else. Have I lived with an awareness that I am a 'minority' subject in relation to the Valley? The answer ought to be an emphatic 'yes' especially during the present times. But it is not. As I examine my upbringing with every objectivity at my command, I am unable to refuse to myself the truth that even through these years of ostensibly religious travail, it is in the Valley that I feel at 'home' rather than either in heartland India or in a preponderantly Hindu majority Jammu province.

Crucially, this abiding sense of 'home' does not derive merely from my Kashmiri linguistic identity or from accreted food habits, although these remain of defining importance. What I wish to emphasize is that it has equally to do with far greater comfort levels with forms of lived culture and of worship shared with Kashmiri Muslims than with any other cultural formations available to me in India. Despite, therefore, my Hindu birth, these are features that set me apart not just from mainland Hindu assertions but also from those Kashmiri Pandits whose newer reconstructions of local history have increasingly taken on exclusivist emphases, and just as equally from those Kashmiri Muslims whose political need meets those reconstructions from matching extremes. And even as I am able to see that these complementing extremes—which I can sanguinely denote falsifications, although these

are not without cause or consequence—are as much responses to a short history of conflict as an insistence on other forms of identity in the heartland, I can already decry a renewed urgency on behalf of many Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims to recuperate what that short history has put under cloud.<sup>5</sup>

Simultaneously, much more than many Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims, other facets of my diachronic subjectivity involve me in sub-continental and international concerns along diverse axes of interest—interests that help me operate outside the Valley without suffering terminal angst about my identity, or the identity of the community into which I happen to be born. And, as to the history of Kashmiris, Pandits included, I derive significations at my points of choosing, points that seem to me redolent with ideals of community and humanism that I endorse everywhere as being consistent with the best reason within a world of relative options.

#### IV

Look where you will, and the dialectic of identity formation reveals itself inseparable from concrete material interests as those interests suffer mutation through the exigencies of changing histories. One recalls that in the middle 20s of the last century, circumstances caused a sentient Kashmiri Pandit leadership to give the call 'Kashmir for Kashmiris'. Put simply, this bold enunciation was a response to the induction by the then Maharaja of a Punjabi ethnic bureaucracy into the state, directly undermining the specific space that Pandits occupied. The interesting inference to be drawn here is that Pandit interests were then foregrounded as Kashmiri interests, and that a nascent Kashmiri Muslim leadership did not feel impelled to contradict that formulation with any animus. Not until several decades after Independence when a sizeable educated Muslim middle class emerged as a result of the phenomenal spread of college education among Muslims were those kinds of tensions to become visible—and

with the same sort of justification that informs the current consensus about the need for reservations.

Yet, events thereafter—especially since the 1980s—have conspired to displace ethnic awareness among Pandits into an aggressive communal one. Mention *Kashmiriyat* to a refugee Pandit today and you incur a verbal assault. All the while, paradoxically, the experience and preference of some 8,000 or so Pandits, who have never left the Valley, remain disjuncted from the social and political reformulations of those in the 'diaspora'. Indeed, during my visit to the Valley in 2003, the Secretary of the Kashmiri Pandit Association there (a young person called Mr Kaul) confided to me, among other things, the sad truth that if ever they now travel outside the Valley, they seek to skirt Jammu in order to escape the opprobrium that they are traitors to the cause. Understandably, their continued presence in the Valley belies the two principle contentions of communalized vanguards outside the Valley—that Pandits are unsafe in the Valley, more so than Muslims, and that they require a discrete 'homeland'.<sup>6</sup> In the meanwhile, one of the ways in which the accusers keep memories of 'home' alive in the 'diaspora' is, ironically, not just by aggressively sharing mainland Hindu practices in Delhi and elsewhere, but by constructing replicas of Hari Parbat, Kheer Bhawani and such other (in Faridabad, for instance). Thus Hindu yes, but still Kashmiri Hindu!

The trajectory that has defined the reconstitution of Pandit attitudes to the totality, Kashmir, and, one might add, India, finds inevitable parallels—with, nonetheless, very material differences—in the cogitations and praxis among Kashmiri Muslims.

On his return from Aligarh University in 1930, Sheikh Abdullah established the Muslim Conference in 1932, in the wake of the brutal police action of July 1931. Given the history of the Kashmiri Muslims during a century-long Dogra rule, Abdullah had perhaps greater justification at that stage to view it as essentially anti-Muslim than the Pandits had in the mid-20s when they opposed the Maharaja's induction of Punjabi bureaucracy.

Yet, within just seven years, he came to reconstitute the Muslim Conference into the National Conference. When, on 10 May 1944, Jinnah stipulated in his speech at Pratap Park: "Muslims have one platform, one *Kalma* and one God... I am a Muslim and all my sympathies are for the Muslim cause."

Abdullah's retort was sharp and certain; he declared: "The ills of this land can only be remedied by carrying Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs together."<sup>7</sup>

It needs to be recalled that when Abdullah launched the Quit Kashmir in 1946 (after the Maharaja's refusal to grant him audience), he condemned Dogra rule "as an alien rule comparable to that of the Sikhs, Pathans and the Mughals".<sup>8</sup>

Peeved (again in 1944) by Jinnah's characterization of the National Conference as a "band of gangsters", Abdullah, on June 20, lashed out: "If Jinnah does not give up the habit of interfering in our politics, it will be difficult for him to go back in an honourable manner."

Then on June 24, he, in a written statement, made the following momentous reflection—the change over time in the self-perception of the movement (its identity) that he was now leading—"As for the National Conference, we certainly owe no apologies to Mr Jinnah for our existence. Starting the Muslim Conference as a sectional organization in 1932, we passed on to a higher stage of political evolution in 1939. Thus, we passed Mr Jinnah's milestone of today over five years ago."<sup>9</sup>

The subsequent history between Abdullah's arrest in 1953 and now is too well known to need belabouring. What should interest us is that as Kashmiri Muslim 'evolution' from a sectional force to the National Conference had defined an identity shift as a historic response to contending options then, the subsequent travails of identity and political choice(s) have no less been impelled by sub-continental realities.

For a year or two (1989–1991), it might have seemed that these options were all going one way; yet, within a decade, most Muslim leaderships and bulk of the mass opinion within the Valley seem to have

already rejected what they might have willingly or unwillingly embraced then. Who, then, in our day, may be said to represent the 'real' Kashmiri Muslim—the espouser of jihad aiming to amalgamate the Valley with Pakistan, the 'nationalist' seeking to cement union with India, or the protagonist of internal autonomy? And who may be regarded the authentic representer of what is 'real'? Nor is this spectrum among Kashmiri Pandits any the less varied: who represents their identity best—the 'homeland' espouser, the autonomy endorser, the Pandits who never left the Valley, or the new generation that has been born outside the Valley, and for whom 'home' is merely a narrated inheritance? Were there not Pandits as well who fervently argued for Kashmir's accession to Pakistan (Prem Nath Bazaz readily comes to mind).

And then, what of the quality of identification (or lack of) between Muslims in the Valley and the rest of India? Is it not food for great thought that whether it was Bhagalpur in the 80s or Gujarat in 2002, these events should have seemed distant and epiphenomenal in Kashmir? That, paradoxically if you will, Kashmiri Muslims agonize even now in far more felt ways about their Pandit brethren than they do about the bulk of co-religionists in the mainland. Or think of the routine woes of Indian Muslim women as you ponder the following stipulation in the New Kashmir Constitution of 1944, stipulations that, having been largely implemented, can alone explain the educated modernity and wide professional accomplishments of Kashmiri Muslim women in the towns in contrast to the fate of the preponderant majority of Muslim women in India's major *moffusils* or big city ghettos:

Women citizens shall be accorded equal rights with men in all fields of national life: economic, cultural, political, and in the state services. These rights shall be realized by affording women the right to work in every employment upon equal terms and for equal wages with men. Women shall be ensured rest, social insurance and educational equality with men. The law shall give special protection to the interests of mother and child. (Clause 12)

Enough, you might say, to spoil the day for any Deobandi or even a Bareilvi, not to speak of the Wahabi. Then again, if Kashmiri Muslim women today are also found earning their widowed bread from prostitution, or making money courtesy upmarket sex rackets, all that cannot but cause serious obstacles to the project of a Dukhtarane-Millat leadership that seeks to propagate a static and abstract representation of who the 'real' Kashmiri Muslim woman is (or ought to be). Another proof of how closed and authoritarian systems of thought seek hegemony by affecting shrinkages of identity into unilinear universalities. Needless to say, life always defeats impositions of this kind. Realities and identities just do not simply exist in some limbo beyond history: they are made in the rough and tumble of concrete contentions.

If identity considerations still loom so large in the public and political concerns of our part of the world, there is no better way, I think, of conceptualizing this than by pondering the failure of the emergent post-colonial states to deliver 'citizenship' of a consistency that is insured by the operation of law and institutional practice, and by the states' demonstrated prowess in delivering equity across the board.

In our own case, till such time as the present bewildering plethora of social practices and organizations exist in cauldrons of exploitative irrationality—advanced, compradore, crony, mercantile capitalism or powerful remnants of feudalism, cussed forms of patriarchy or communalism happily hand-in-glove with either imperialism or religious revanchism or systems of education from the primary to the highest levels, calculated and calibrated to reinforce inequality. The same as the abrasive and greedy strategies of 'development' and so on—it is hardly to be thought that the construction of identities whether in the pursuit of collective self-esteem or material group advantage will cease. This is as true of the supposedly metropolitan segments as of denigrated peripheries. Intimately related to the stages of advance in the project of democracy, mere moralizing from some self-assumed high ground will not do.

Identities, then, are not just the givens at our birth; they are processes and unfoldings, dependent on how the dialectic between what we inherit and acquire shapes as our subjectivities answer, or fail to answer, to homilies at home, guidance at school, the work we engage in, the books we read, now the media we watch, the company we keep, the communication we enter into with respect to events and turmoils from which we cannot escape, either as historical agents or victims, or both. A Qazi Tauqeer before and after his breakthrough in the metropolis cannot be the same item of identity; nor may the young Muslim lady from Rajouri, who led the passing out parade at the IMA a year ago, be accessible to easy encapsulation. Collectively, Kashmiri Muslim enrolment in the Indian army before and after 2001 must offer further difficulties in the way in which we habitually stereo-type both the army and the young Kashmiri Muslim. Identities, both individual and collective, are what we make of them through the vicissitudes of stimulus and response.

A note at the end: internationally, farcical confabulations of the identity of world leaders and whole nation-states are directly attributable to the parochial needs and operations of both subaltern warlords and powerful hegemons. Thus, an Osama can in one circumstance be constituted into an anti-communist freedom fighter, and at another a dangerous and evil 'terrorist', or a Saddam be called upon to save secular life in the region by invading a Mullah-led Iran (never mind its massive popular legitimacy), and then be invaded in turn for being too non-compliant with the requirements of imperialism. Democracy can be trumpeted, but only when friendly governments are slated to win elections, not if a Hamas comes to legitimate power. Dictators can be derided unless, like the one across the border, or those that used to exist in Latin America and East Asia, willing to play second-fiddle to the ones who claim the divine right to lay down definitions and constitute identities, until the 'general will' yet again reverses all that and transforms the landscape of identities in unconscionable ways and dimensions.<sup>10</sup>

## **Section IV**

### **Identity Politics of Women and Dalits**

## Identity of Kashmiri Women

Krishna Misri

Although gender is a missing component in the growing body of discourse and literature on Kashmir, this paper makes an attempt to map the complex and variegated picture of women's identity, down the ages, in the light of insights that contemporary researches provide.

Location of feminine identity is a conundrum, more so in the case of Kashmiri women. The areas of women's studies, issues and history under diverse socio-economic, political, religious and cultural processes, predominated by patriarchal structures down the ages, remain unexplored. Though a rich field for investigation and bearing far-reaching implications, hardly any scholarship has focused on analyzing the issues within new theoretical frameworks, matrices and research, and questioned the old paradigms. Worse, there are no authentic and coherent accounts, autobiographies, visual, oral or written histories by women themselves on even purely women-related themes to help define their subjectivity.

Even the rich and uninterrupted historiography, mostly gender neutral, is problematic. Selective women, measuring up to male standards, have been glorified, while others, who significantly impacted the Kashmiri ethos down the centuries, have been glossed over. Surprisingly, Lal Ded (also known as Lalla Arifa), the most outstanding Kashmiri woman, poet/mystic, who continues to inspire and is invoked by Kashmiris of all faiths in times of 'personal dilemma', does not figure in Jonaraja's *Rajatarangini*, though he updated Kalhana's famous chronicle and covered the historic period. Nor did Shrivara or Shuka, who succeeded him, mention her in their updated narratives. The earliest reference, J Kaul points out in his scholarly work on Lal Ded, is in a hagiography written by Mishkati in AD 1654. The first ever chronicle to mention her name is in Persian (AD 1746) by Muhammad Azam Dedamari.<sup>1</sup>

The question arises: Why was not Lal Ded recognized by Jonaraja, Shrivara or Shuka, chroniclers of history of Kashmir in Sanskrit from the 14th to the 16th Century? Jaishree Kak Odin, giving refreshing insights, highlights Lalla's personal dilemma as a woman of medieval Kashmir transgressing the male preserve of metaphysical experiences and the world. She observes, "The nature of this experience is strongly determined in its first stages by the specificity of gender and class." Odin further comments that Lalla's location as a woman placed her spiritual attainments in a contradictory position to the traditional role of a woman and a wife in which self-effacement and subservience rather than self-mastery were promoted. Lalla's verses, then, represent the female voice that represents and finally transforms a male-centred model of reality.<sup>2</sup>

Same is with Habba Khatoon, the legendary poetess/musician of the 16th Century. Her songs are on the lips of Kashmiris and sung to celebrate moments of 'social togetherness'. She enlivened the palace of Sultan Yusuf Shah Chak, the last ruler of Chak dynasty, with her melodious songs and poetry. Pandit Shuka was a close associate of Yusuf Shah Chak and a witness to Akbar's annexation of Kashmir.

He updated *Rajatarangini* from AD 1513–1586, but conveniently left Habba Khatoon out.<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly, the gender-biased narratives constructed by men reveal severe fault lines. Nevertheless, the only attempt at gendering the history of Kashmir, so far, has been made by Prem Nath Bazaz. *Daughters of the Vitasta*<sup>4</sup> is a pioneering work; the book is more than half-a-century old. Much blood has flowed down the bridges of Jhelum since. An update is in order.

Constructing the identity of the Kashmiri women is less than easy, given the fact that patriarchy pervaded all aspects of their lives. Contemporary social scientists and academics factor geopolitics, history, ethnicity, language, religion, class and caste as dominant variables in constructing the local identities of women and men. However, these variables go through profound changes under the far-reaching impact of gender, inequality and inequity that characterize the Kashmiri society. Sen observes that inequality between women and men can appear in many different forms, it has many faces. Gender disparity is, in fact, not one affliction but a multitude of problems<sup>5</sup> that come along with the hydra-headed gender inequality, position women differently in male-defined structures and significantly impact their subjectivity. Not surprisingly, gender emerges as the predominant factor in shaping the insights, attitudes, responses, urges, aspirations, and agency of women. Patriarchal practices and ideologies have projected the images of 'devoted', 'passive' and 'self-sacrificing women', no way fit for agency. These, in turn, influenced women's self-images and future roles. Worse still, to perpetuate notions of gender inequality, ideologies of 'purity' are invoked on the grounds of biological differentiations. These make women's bodies the sites for community's 'honour'; humiliation and even demoralization of the enemy. Women become victims of 'honour killings', increased levels of violence, rape and all kinds of sex differentiated abuses and atrocities. The Kashmiri women have been the chief victims of these atrocities. Over the centuries, they have internalized these values and their material existence further

reinforced the stereotyped notions. Also, these perceptions have become an integral part of their lives and the cornerstone on which every other reality of their lives rests. Nonetheless, the growing volume of feminine literature, movements, activists, scholars and academics in recent decades, has broadened the focus on women's issues. They highlight the role of power-structures and hegemonic processes that control the daily lives of women and determine these constructions. New schools of theoretical framework questioning old paradigms have emerged. Feminine identity is no longer viewed as natural and essential, it is, by and large, constructed.

Further, female identities caught in the grip of complexities at several layers of power-structures are hard to situate. Class/caste, bearing significant implications, brings about qualitative changes and adds contradictions and complexities to these. Feminine scholars point out that women are not to be viewed as a 'class' by themselves, but they belong to various strata in the social hierarchy. This predisposes women belonging to a particular class, sharing limited partnerships and empathy with the elements of patriarchy of their own class. Nevertheless, the internal dynamism of every class formation inevitably relegates them to an inferior status. Paradoxically, while some women complicity with patriarchy and perpetuate oppression on other men and women of lower class/castes, the contradictions in the system reposition them as the oppressed within that class. To illustrate, a zamindarini may be complicit in perpetuating the exploitation of the lower caste/class labourers and their wives, yet her own life is in the grip of feudal patriarchal fiat and her social agency is severely flawed. Sangri attributes the tyrant mother-in-law syndrome in the Indian families to this complexity. Secluded and deprived of social participation, she argues, some women try to deviate and set up micro alternate power centres which are directly or indirectly controlled by patriarchy, "very often leading to the perpetuation of their own or of other women's oppression within the family".<sup>6</sup> However, she warns against taking a simplistic view and notes that domestic oppression of women as well

as family arrangements, stemming from patriarchal family structures, are also directly related to other sources of social inequality based on caste or class. In societies run on male-defined asymmetrical structures, norms of morality, social taboos and repression of women in the family reflect a wider social malaise. Moreover, caste/class disparities intensify disadvantages related to gender inequality. In other words, a low-caste woman is positioned as doubly disadvantaged in the social hierarchy. The political structures along with cultural and religious practices serve to create material conditions as well as ideology of society, so that women themselves become 'complicit' in their own oppression as well as those of other men and women of lower castes.<sup>7</sup> The contradictory identities of women as 'complicit' as well as 'transgressor' that emerge in patriarchal/hierarchical structures make any analysis of female subjectivity problematic.

Given these complexities, it is possible to situate the identity of the Kashmiri women only in a historical backdrop blended with the broader framework of new theoretical and empirical insights. In other words, the connectivity between the twin processes calls for a fresh methodological approach.

Going back in time<sup>8</sup>, Pandit Kalhana's monumental work *Rajatarangini* (AD 1148-49), is the basis of historiography of Kashmir from primordial to his own times (AD 1150). The chronicle is focussed on the succession of kings, conquests, treason, tyranny and murders followed by civil wars. Jonaraja updated the chronicle from AD 1150 to 1450. However, the historiography attaches little significance to women; hardly any historical documents chronicle the lives of Kashmiri women down the ages. Nonetheless, a myth of golden age is evoked and this has functionalized as a historical truth. It is believed that women had reached pinnacles of power in ancient times. Subscribing to this view, Bazaz observed that Kashmiri women enjoyed remarkable freedom, wielded ample power and exercised responsibility which gave them a high status in society. Members of both the sexes equally shared joys and sorrows of life.<sup>9</sup>



Considering that the ancient societies were monarchies, not only queens but all women connected with royalty and power elites enjoyed privileges, some even played prominent roles. Queen Sugandha and Queen Didda exercised great influence even during the reigns of their husbands. Before assuming sovereign power, they acted as the regents of their minor sons. The exigencies of patriarchy, at times, demanded women to fill up the gaps and they rose to the occasion. Kota Rani also played a crucial role at a critical juncture of history. In fact, she was the real power behind the throne even during the reign of her husband, Udayanadeva. She gave a crushing defeat to the Mongolian invader Achala, while her husband sought personal safety and left the scene. Displaying rare heroism and sacrificing her feelings of 'widowhood' and 'motherhood', she fought against great odds to preserve the indigenous rule in the kingdom but failed.

However, enmeshed in myth, legend, folklore, supernatural elements and superstition, Kalhana's historiography hardly stands scrutiny on modern scientific methodological grounds. As pointed out by historians, namely Bazaz and Bamzai, it is, more often than not, questionable.<sup>10</sup> The women's identities that emerge from the pages of *Rajatarangini* are closely connected with their birth, religion and notions of 'purity' of that era. Embedded in parochial cultural norms of *varna*, caste and gender insensitivity, the historical perspective is exclusive and narrow. Yet, the vision is amply reflected in the images of queens, queen-regents, commanders, diplomats and women with spiritual potential that are projected as empowered. It is this class/caste of women who occupied centre stage, and also happened to be the subjects of Kalhana's historical concern. Hosts and hosts of women slaves, attendants, wet-nurses and *dasis*, who kept the palaces and harems going, are voiceless and invisible. Further, he idealized the primitive and ghastly practices of Sati, enforced widowhood and socially sanctioned polygamy. The exploitation of women in the 'golden age' took several forms of prostitution such as a flourishing system of concubines (with no marital status) and *devdasis*, women

dedicated to the services of temples. These degrading and oppressive practices robbed women of their dignity and marginalized them. Nonetheless, the epitomes of virtue and wisdom for him were the women who conformed to the primordial cultural values, reinforced by religious beliefs and practices of that primitive era. Not surprisingly, he eulogized a queen, who, demonstrating the best example of conjugal love, offered the supreme sacrifice of her life, and 'cheerfully' and 'voluntarily' mounted the burning pyre of her husband, the king. Similarly, to prove unqualified devotion to her husband even after his death, a 'faithful' widow who secluded herself and followed a strict 'code of widowhood' for the rest of her life, was an ideal.

The pages of *Rajatarangini*<sup>11</sup> are replete with derogatory references to Queen Didda, Kayya and Princess Ananglekha who, among a few others, dared to transgress. Addressing Queen Didda as a 'widow', Kalhana remarked, "Alas, after a single year, when her grief had been allayed, that unfaithful woman, lusting for pleasures..." (*Shloka* 310, Book VII). In another *shloka*, he notes that the whole of womankind was disgraced by the king's favourite concubine named Kayya. "If she did not remember that her Lord had given her the foremost position in the whole seraglio, no matter, let her not remember it, because she was of low origin." (*Shloka* 726, Book VII) Other prejudices like son-preference and discrimination against daughters are revealed in Princess Ananglekha's episode. Forewarned by an astrologer that not his son's progeny but his daughter's son would ascend the throne after his demise, King Balditya tried to change the course of the foretold events. He hurriedly arranged his daughter's marriage to a supposedly low-caste caretaker of his fodder sheds, Durlabh Vardhana. For youthful and vivacious Ananglekha, it was hard to reconcile to the alliance, and, yet unwillingly, she submitted to the will of her father. The conflict in her mind did manifest when she cheated on her husband and had an affair that came her way. Kalhana condemned womanhood in general and Ananglekha in particular and passed strictures against her:

"Fie on these women, who are slaves of their active passions and devoid of reflection." (*Shloka* 513)

"That thing which is called 'woman' is the object of a sense..." (*Shloka* 514)

"Who can restrain women who are fickle by nature?" (*Shloka* 515)

More important, the ancient historiography viewed women, particularly those belonging to the dominant classes, as a 'class' by themselves. The lower class/caste women were none of its concern. *Svapakas* (untouchable), *Domba*, *Chandala*, *Dasi* and female slaves who make casual appearances in the pages of *Rajatarangini* have been, sadly, overlooked. The moot question is where to locate their identity? These women of exploited classes had nothing in common with the women of the dominant classes. They constituted a multitude of women as against the privileged minority of the queens, princesses, commanders and diplomats. Their narratives lie frozen and unheard in the debris of history. Uma Chakravarti pithily comments that the *dasi* disappeared without leaving a trace. Since no one had noticed her presence, no one mourned her disappearance.<sup>12</sup>

Yet, patriarchal discourses flaunt a golden past when women enjoyed freedom, power and equal status. Cast in the unquestioned mould of restrictive patriarchal traditions and cruel practices, it is ironic that these hapless victims are projected as empowered models of ideal womanhood. Empowerment is not about privilege of birth, participation in the public domain, rituals and religious duties alone, it is much more than that. It is about making social, political, economic and cultural institutions efficacious so that women of all classes have the freedom to make meaningful choices. The freedom and opportunity to participate effectively in decision-making within and outside home is of the essence. In this context, modern social scientists and feminine scholars take the 'agent oriented' approach and emphasise the significance of education, earning power and property rights in the empowerment of women. The new discourse focuses on women as vocal and empowered agents giving direction

and meaning not only to their own lives but also transforming social and political processes. Moreover, the unqualified acceptance of the *status quo* by upper class women is an enduring legacy of the era. It was to perpetuate the desired version of patriarchal notions of ideal womanhood that female identities, related to the accepted social norms, came to be constructed and popularized. Identities such as 'devoted', 'self-sacrificing', 'self-effacing' and 'pure' related directly to the 'virtues' of women who willingly accepted an illusory and secondary status in the social hierarchy. These identities were shaped to suit the present and the future. Finally, the upper class/caste women derived their status not from their empowerment but to the identity they were born into. Those not born in the particular identity were considered to be downgraded and out-castes. However, the elitist concept of class/caste exclusion and discrimination is incompatible with modern principles of social equality, justice and progress.

Sadly, the history that unfolded in the centuries to come, plunged the Kashmiri women into a long phase of darkness. They were confined to the dark spaces of cornered enclosures of their homes and lost whatever mobility they had.

## II

The post-independence era opened new vistas for the emancipation and empowerment of the Kashmir women. The new political institutions and milieu encouraged them to look forward to the future as equal partners in the reconstructions of the socio-economic matrix. The Constitution of the state, adopted in 1956, guarantees the right to free and compulsory education under section 20. The section also directs the state to provide for compulsory education for all children, until they complete the age of 14 years. Section 22 makes a significant statement in respect of rights of women. The state is directed to endeavour to secure to all women the right to equal pay for equal work, to reasonable maintenance, the right to equality in all social, educational, political and legal matters and special protection against

all types of misconduct. These provisions generated positive thinking about mainstreaming women. Moreover, women had participated alongside men in the freedom struggle and in the people's resistance movement in 1947 despite having been victims of long-entrenched disabilities and age-old discrimination. The valour they displayed in trying times was fresh in public memory. A significant contributory factor, in the battle against gender disparity, was the emancipatory reform movement launched by forward-looking leaders, in the third decade of the last century. The movement was aimed at imparting basic education to women at the grass-root level, particularly in the downtown and reforming the outmoded social structure. All these factors impacted the consciousness of large sections of women. The enlightened leaders, both among men and women, realized that women could not face new challenges without enhancing their capabilities and professional skills.

The urges and aspirations of women found a quick response from the government. Educational facilities for women, both in urban and rural areas, were expanded. The high point in the endeavour was reached when the first ever Government College for Women was established at Srinagar in 1950. The college, catering to the educational needs of all segments of women, soon became a symbol of their emancipation. Thousands of students who passed out of the college, year after year, were on a new trajectory. Many of them joined universities and professional colleges outside the state to acquire more skills and knowledge, and excelled in various fields. The increase in female enrolment over the years, in the professional institutions that the government opened, showed a positive trend. The establishment of the Jammu and Kashmir University opened new opportunities for girls, whose parents were unwilling to send them outside the state for higher learning. In course of time, women entered almost all professions and were visible all over. A working woman was no longer an anathema, she came to be accepted as an asset. The vertical and horizontal mobility of women was discernible. Seizing various

opportunities, the Kashmiri women made a niche for themselves in the public domain.

This significant phase of less than four decades saw women diversifying into several areas of socio-economic and political activity. Giving a new direction to political participation, the prominent women political leaders activated their network of cadres in urban and rural areas, and fought electoral battles. Begum Akbar Jahan, one of the top-ranking leaders of National Conference, was the first Kashmiri woman to represent the state in the Union Parliament. Begum Zainab, a leader with immense mass appeal, was elected to the State Legislative Assembly in 1973 and joined the government headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, as Minister of State for Social Welfare. Both the leaders deeply impacted the changing roles and perceptions about the Kashmiri women. A few women surfaced at the time of elections to the State Legislative Assembly, however, none of them made a mark. More enterprising women ventured into businesses which called for entrepreneurial skills. These ventures opened doors to employment opportunities for large sections of underprivileged women.

Over the years, the Kashmiri women, in a liberal space, became partners in the struggle for creating opportunities for the well-being of all. Education, economic independence, and political consciousness brought about a paradigm shift in their lives and social fabric. Stepping out of the shadows of usual familial, caste and religious identities, they emerged with their own professional identities in diverse fields of activity. The changing landscape saw them making their own small choices and this reflected in their dress, demeanour and deportment. Breaking free from purdah, many donned sari which did not symbolize a particular identity then! The change over was self-motivated and not due to coercion. Women had come into their own. Reconstituting themselves, they exhibited confidence to break the shells of stereotype images, and projected new images of modern and professional women. It was exciting to be a part of this resurgence. However, none of this is to argue that gender issues were finally settled—that, of course, is

an ongoing struggle. But the fact that voices of reason and modernity asserted themselves when centuries-old patriarchal oppression and exploitation had consigned women to the margins of an extremely shrinking space, has been acknowledged. The emancipatory phase, if not interrupted and allowed to move full cycle, had the potential to shape the future course of women's subjectivity and agency. Regrettably, that was not to be.

The key question is what kind of 'self' and 'subjectivity' were formed? Considering that the area of the Kashmiri women's studies has received little theoretical and empirical scrutiny, it is difficult to give a satisfactory answer. The scarcity of published data further complicates the problem. In view of the constraints only broad observations can be made. It is a widely accepted fact that gender issues are complex, structured and nuanced. The male initiated process of social change, though significant in many respects, had its limitations. While attempting to reform the social order, it did not address the key issues of gender disparity and gender inequity. Gender, class and caste, in an encompassing sense, in the context of Kashmiri social and political processes, have yet to become central to the understanding of social inequality. The historical role of the modernizing process was to call attention to the state of extreme marginalization and abysmal levels of ignorance and backwardness of the poverty-stricken Kashmiri women. Their deplorable condition was incompatible with the growing aspirations of the emerging upwardly mobile middle class men, exposed to modern education. The focus was on bringing women out of the mire of quagmire. The imbalances in the social system needed to be corrected so that women could perform their domestic roles in a changing milieu. Feminist scholars argue that the urges and aspirations of men to modernize prompt them to mediate between an outmoded system and forces of social change. Forbes notes that patriarchal systems offer women few opportunities until men decide that it is time for change. Also, the ideological construction of gender gives men a predominant position to act against the system

and play a positive and uplifting role at critical junctures of socio-political developments. Yet, given the innate resilience of patriarchy to reconstitute and re-emerge in a new avatar, it retains its salient elements of supremacy and continuity under all dispensations. Women, on the other hand, are marginalized, oppressed and vulnerable. They need a genuine impetus from patriarchy to change. The processes of emancipation were directed to regulate and reorganize the lives of women within a new framework of emerging power relations. The key issues of gender disparity and justice, however, remained unresolved. The limitations of the transformative processes severely impinged on the identity of women. Despite education, earning capacity and empowerment, they were pushed back to a secondary position in the patriarchal hierarchy.

The Kashmiri women entered public space, while their domestic spaces continued to be predominated by the outmoded feudal structures and attitudes. Even the social attitudes remained unaltered. Balancing their career choices within these structures added to their responsibilities and burden. While they were coming to grips with their new identities in the public domain, the private domain demanded conventional and traditional roles. The transitional period was tough. There was not much encouragement from the families either. Their work and achievements, at times, came to be devalued. They came to be projected as neither good mothers nor good wives, which added to the given 'guilt complex' of a working woman. Majority of working women had little control on their earnings. These contradictions manifested in new forms of social and economic exploitation of women. They could make few choices and assert their subjectivity. The 'limited empowerment' did not enable them to question the unquestioned patriarchal hegemony and power-relations. They conformed in varying degrees. Over time, women developed a culture of silence and acceptance. Soon they internalized the process. Without articulating and unable to find a solution to their problems, they echoed the voices of their patriarchy. The trend continues till date.

No doubt, the eminent women leaders played a positive role, yet the absence of an organized women's movement negatively impacted the growth of empowering identities of women. Modern academic analysts and feminists opine that woman's empowerment and selfhood can not be divorced from women's collective organized strength to prioritize their agenda and their participation in socio-political processes from the lowest to highest level. More important is the acceptance of their changing roles for the families and the society. With women's key agenda having never been prioritized by women themselves, gender disparity perpetuates, despite women's education and economic independence. The 'limited empowerment' generated 'limited identities'.

None of this is to berate the enormous gains and significance of the modernizing process. This is to highlight the missing links which need to be corrected. The modernizing process was a major breakthrough that put women on a new direction. But time was of the essence. In retrospect, one believes that but for the sudden reversal and negation of the process due to the onslaught of militancy, women would develop an understanding of the nuances of patriarchal power relations and assert their subjectivity. Perhaps that would lead to more egalitarianism and levelling of gender relations. This would add meaning and substance to their empowerment and identities.

### III

However, the normal course of discourse has been blurred in Kashmir since the outbreak of the armed insurgency followed by the counter insurgency measures by the state. Issues of women's development and identity are no longer a priority and have been pushed to the background. On the other hand, myopic hardliner politics of radical religious identities have been pitched-forked to the centre stage. A qualitatively changed socio-political scenario has unfolded itself. Women across the spectrum have been the abject victims of this

brutalized phenomenon. The focus has shifted from empowerment of women to the volatile politics of religious identities.

Radical politicalization of singular identity, carried out vehemently, polarized a multi-cultural and multi-religious people, who celebrated their pluralism and were in sync with each other. An eclectic culture that defined the Kashmiri ethos since ages has become the first casualty of the atrocious phenomenon. Nonetheless, it is a widely accepted fact that war and peace are gendered activities. Women do not initiate armed conflict, yet they bear the harshest brunt. The Kashmiri women, as the markers of their collectivities, have become the sites for contesting political ideologies and violence. Their current anguish and victimhood is perhaps symbolized by the commonplace terms in circulation that identify them—rape victims, kidnapped and abducted women, migrants, widows, 'half-widows' and so on.

The preamble to the UN Declaration on Elimination of Violence Against Women states that violence against women is a product of 'unequal power relations' between men and women that characterize gender relations in all parts of the world. The declaration recognizes that in addition to individual acts of violence it is this history of unequal relations that is at the core of widespread and pervasive nature of violence against women. Violence against women is a universal reality but at the same time it is invisible.<sup>13</sup> Central to this appraisal is the fact that violence against women is inbuilt in patriarchal structures. While physical violence against women in conditions of armed conflict is 'visible, quick and intended', the structural violence inherent in the system is deep-rooted and subtle. Therefore, violence against women in times of armed conflict is, to a large extent, a reflection of violence that occurs in their daily lives. However, the form that violence takes 'in normal times' as well as in conditions of conflict is directly related to the historical, cultural, political and regional specificities.

Rape, gang-rape, kidnapping and abductions, which huge numbers of Kashmiri women are subjected to, in the current conflict, are the worst manifestations of sadist macho masculinity. The barbaric

acts are related to the patriarchal notions of women being the property of men, and therefore, the physical violations of women amount to challenging the collective 'honour' and 'purity' of communities. Women are targeted primarily to create terror and break the spirit of the 'enemy'. Also, abduction and rape become strategies for stripping women of their personal assets and of their political assets, honour or more precisely community honour.<sup>14</sup> The traumatized victims of rape live their lives as stigmatized women, and yet again suffer as victims of social ostracism. Sadly, gripped in continuing violence, the trauma and torture of the Kashmiri women seems to be never-ending.

Internally displaced women present another dimension of the armed conflict. Selective killings, rape, abductions of women across the spectrum, compounded by a total collapse of systems and all-pervasive fear, marked the outbreak of insurgency. The Valley presented a scene worse than that of Hobbesian 'State of Nature'. Several politicians belonging to different political persuasions, and the Kashmiri Pandits were driven to call it a day. The result was mass exodus of panic-stricken people, numbering more than half a million, to safer zones. Hordes of urban and rural poor landed in Jammu and were accommodated in make-shift camps. A large number are living outside the camps in the same region. Others are spread over in other parts of the country. With no sanitary and other facilities, lack of privacy, subsistence on meagre rations and subsidies doled out to them, the women 'migrants' in the camps present a pathetic scene. Having lost their homes, properties, sense of belonging and identity, they dream of going back to their homes. Nonetheless, while coming to terms with their changed lives in unfamiliar physical and cultural environment, the 'migrant' women have the satisfaction of living in an atmosphere free from the dehumanizing impact of external violence and all that it implies in the lives of women. Yet, displacement does not imply only physical dislocation, it has overwhelming psychological, sociological and economic dimensions. The internally displaced groups are invisible and voiceless, 'experiencing a high degree of alienation, marginalization, and exclusion from the larger society.'

Further, the severe impact of violence further compounded by gender disparity and inequity inherent in socio-cultural structures and institutions of the Kashmiris is reflected in the harsh plight of growing numbers of widows, 'half-widows' and females heading households without male support in adverse conditions. The Muslim Personal Law gives differential access between son and daughter to inheritance. The daughter inherits one half of what the son inherits from father's property. A widow's share is 1/8th of the husband's estate. If the father-in-law of the widow is alive, neither she nor her children can claim any share in the family property.<sup>15</sup> Women identified as 'half-widows' are worse off. These are women whose husbands are presumed to be dead or missing but they have no proof to prove so. Muzamil Jaleel points out: they are called the 'half-widows' of the Kashmir valley. About 900 of them, their husbands are missing, some have been allegedly picked up by the security forces, others by militants. And because they aren't widows, they cannot claim even the meagre compensation given by the state government. Neither do they know how long they will have to wait before they get the religious sanction to marry again. Different religious scholars have different views and the wait can vary from four years to 90!<sup>16</sup> The harsh reality is that abysmal deprivation, poverty and disease make these segments of women extremely vulnerable and marginalized. Circumstances push them into flesh trade and prostitution dens.

Violence against women has taken a heavy toll in terms of damage to their health. The prolonged brutality, trauma, anxiety and dislocation have ripped apart the psyche of women. Increased emotional stress levels have given rise to psychosomatic and gynaecological disorders. Also, the disruption of health services, medical aid and non-availability of doctors, result in high rates of mother/child mortality in the Valley. The health related problems of large numbers of women are bound to have long-term negative impact on their children, families and even the society. The deteriorating health conditions of displaced women on the other hand, are directly related to their migration caused by the armed conflict. Displacement calls for reworking of life patterns

in unfamiliar and harsh weather conditions of the plains. Women living in cramped unhygienic spaces are prone to diseases related to stress, viral and bacterial infections. Doctors in Jammu warn against an upward trend in mortality rate and downslide in the growth rate among migrant women.

Pondering over the issues, the militants' fatwas and diktats imposing a dress code on women, during the winter of 1990, come to mind. Events, though hard to register, were unfolding at a rapid pace. While the Muslim women were coerced to wear *burqa*, the Hindu women were directed to wear bindi, whether they ever did so or not. This was a sinister move with sinister socio-political ramifications. Young women, who, braving terror and militant's pressure tactics resisted, became the victims of acid attacks on their faces. Nonetheless, overawed by fear, vast majority of the Muslim women submitted. The mad rush for stitching of *burqas* in the markets made huge numbers of the Muslim women faceless and invisible overnight and shrouded their empowered identities. The sharp contrast between the black *burqa*-clad students and teachers with snow-carpeted lawns and surroundings of the colleges, gave a sense of symbolic, a cataclysmic darkness that had engulfed the Valley and the Kashmiri women. Imposition of a dress code by regressive and authoritarian forces, with medieval, mindsets, signals dangerous portent for women—from suppression of the empowering identities to thrusting them to an inferior status and finally making them pliable in order to further their atavistic political agendas. Radhika Coomaraswamy observes that living in anticipation of violence curtails their (women's) priorities and the choices they make for the future. It makes women search out men for protection rather than companionship and makes women dependent and vulnerable. Fear then socializes women to conform to the very ideological norms that ensure their subordination.<sup>17</sup>

Where then to locate the identity of Kashmiri women caught between the guns held by the militants and the security forces? Complexities in women's disconnected lives hardly indicate identities

that are definitive. The discourses during the two decades of the conflict, largely, focus on women either as victims and losers or welfare beneficiaries. Rarely has attention been paid to the resilience exhibited and strategies evolved by them to reconstitute their disrupted lives, face the struggles of everyday life and contribute to the welfare of families as well as their communities in adverse conditions. Going beyond their visibility as victims—widows, 'half-widows' and women in diaspora—all try to come to terms with the changed reality in their lives. Stepping out of their traditional roles and cultural framework, the Kashmiri women have taken on additional responsibilities in conditions of the conflict. Contemporary feminine research provides fresh insights on linkages between women's agency and armed conflict. Paradoxically, the armed strife abruptly pushes women into public spaces and prompts them to take on several agency-oriented roles. These roles, they argue, are propelled by the survival strategies that women forge and their nurturing instincts for children and families. Also, a deep sense of personal loss, death or victimhood of a kin, at times acts as a driving force. The conflict, ironically has the potential of transforming women's lives and enabling them to take on political, leadership and decision-making roles. However, the agency women gain is hardly un-ambivalent; it permanently burdens them with a sense of loss, anguish and guilt. Therefore, feminine scholars term it as 'ambivalent empowerment'. Ambivalent empowerment, on the one hand, signifies women's resilience to face new challenges in adverse conditions, transcending their traditional roles. On the other hand, it reflects contradictions that frame women's identity. However, ambivalent 'empowerment' is flawed and illusory. Substantive and real identities of women are not only related to education and public space but, more importantly, to the dominant politico-social ideology that motivates their agency.

Reorganizing their shattered lives, the Kashmiri women have taken on multiple roles. Ordinary housewives, semiliterate and underprivileged women, transcending traditional inhibitions have

demonstrated their resourcefulness by taking initiatives to mitigate the loss and pain of their families and communities. While some have become part of larger reconstruction and conflict mitigation processes, others are net-working to solve everyday problems in homes and camps. Parveena Ahangar's untiring search and personal quest for her missing son has culminated in a major initiative—Association of the Parents of the Disappeared (APDP). The organization has become a rallying forum for parents and relations in search of their sons and kin, whose whereabouts are unknown. As chairperson of the organization, Parveena Ahangar, a semi-literate housewife, has made a mark and emerges as a courageous and persuasive voice from the Valley.

The agency oriented roles of the Kashmiri women are highly visible in their massive political mobilization and activism. The conflict saw streets of Srinagar and all major towns overflow with non-literate and dispossessed women, in the vanguard of massive demonstrations and protest rallies, echoing the slogans that men raised. Also mothers rush out to form human walls and protect their sons from being picked up. Several mothers groups are engaged in negotiations with civil, judicial and military authorities, at various levels, to get their sons released from jails.

Several women's formations have surfaced since last two decades. Khawateen Markaz and Dukhtaran-e-Millat (Daughters of Revolution) represent two Srinagar-based formations. The former's support to *azadi* and latter's advocacy of merger with Pakistan, indicate their political affiliations and identities. Yet, women neither figure in the institutional hierarchies nor are they entitled to membership of various militant parties or groups. As such, they have no leadership profiles in the structural frameworks of the all-male militant organizations. Khawateen Markaz takes a moderate stand on several issues including wearing of *burqa*. But, Dukhtaran-e-Millat, projecting a radical Islamic image, advocates wearing of *burqa* by all Muslim women and justifies imposition of *purdah*, even by force. Interestingly, they see no contradiction in rejecting patriarchal notions of 'feminized idealhood'

in non-traditional roles of women such as taking up jobs or political participation. The third formation, 'Daughters of Vitasta', women's wing of Panun Kashmir, represents the other end of the spectrum. It sees resolutions of the displaced women's issues in the perspective of a 'separate homeland' for the Pandits. Nonetheless, despite their varying perceptions, the three formations exhibit several common traits. One, rooted in exclusionary identities, they play on the religious sentiments of women to mobilize them on socio-cultural and political issues. Two, ideologically and structurally under the control of the main groups, these formations further the political ends of their patriarchy. Three, all formations see the resolution of women's question through the lens of their patriarchy—post-conflict aftermath.

Clearly, the political agency of women that has emerged during the course of the conflict is problematic. It is neither autonomous nor does it open out spaces to organize independently and to priorities women's issues. The problems of growing numbers of victims of rape, overwhelmingly increasing numbers of widows, 'half-widows' and displaced women—unprecedented in the history of Kashmir—are a formidable challenge. What these women need to go through the courageous journeys of their lives is empowerment and not welfare. That needs building institutions to streamline their rehabilitation within a time-frame. It also needs a change in the perspectives. Yet, these issues do not seem to be the priority of the formations.

It does not need great imagination in the context of Kashmir to visualize the fallout of politicalization of religious identities. The communitarian schism that has segregated and scattered communities living in 'us versus them' syndrome, is a result of the heinous phenomenon. It has torn apart the secular bonds between people of different faiths who till recently shared a common language, history and geographical space. Exclusionary identities feed and fortify mutual prejudices, forge destructive social fragmentation and discord. The impasse sets in motion a cycle of violence and counter violence. However, none of this is to argue that religious beliefs are not



important in the personal lives of the Kashmiris. But a multi-religious population needs to share a common identity, without sharing the same religion. That inclusive conciliatory identity alone can address the political and cultural concerns of women and men belonging to various faiths. Also, politics of singular identity give religious sanction to gender hierarchies and asymmetry that breeds domestic as well as public violence against women.

More importantly, the linkages between the militarized politics and the political agency of women add to the complexities of the agency. Militarized politics symbolized by AK-47, embedding fundamentalism and totalitarianism are antithetical to women's emancipatory politics and empowerment. There is little space for women's rights, freedoms, social equality and equity within the hegemonistic ideological frameworks and agendas of the militant outfits. The overt and covert involvement of women in the destructive struggles may create 'agentive moments' but the agency is tenuous. Instead of empowering women, such 'agentive moments' make women willing complicit in the processes that ultimately disempower and oppress them. Worse still, women's participation in the militarized conflict is a potential threat to the role of politics, political institutions and the Kashmiri civil society. Aggressive parochialism and fascism embedded in militarized terror, creates violence all around. The Kashmiri women's participation in the conflict portends the end of civil society. It is a zero-sum game. Radhika Coomaraswamy, the former UN Special Rapporteur on Women, notes, "It signals the militarization of civil society—a militarization which in itself is inimical to anyone who believes in human rights."<sup>18</sup>

Looking ahead, the phenomenon of aggressive militancy, terror and violence that has engulfed Kashmir over the last two traumatic decades, poses complex challenges. The destructive politics springing from reductionism and relativism of identities have impoverished possibilities of social action and collective quest of Kashmiris for peace and dignity. Above all, the spirit of syncretism that characterized

the Kashmiri identity is destroyed. There is a need to look for a viable vision of identities—a vision that enables to explore multiple possibilities to respect differences and pluralism and finally, helps the Kashmiris to see light at the end of the tunnel. The civil society, instead of feeling paralyzed has to accept the challenge. However, it is only in a broad spectrum of inclusive identities that empowering identities of Kashmiri women can emerge.

A refreshing and insightful vision, focused on a new paradigm of identity comes from the Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen. In his two scholarly works, *The Argumentative Indian* (2005), and *Identity and Violence: Illusion of Destiny* (2006), he makes a spirited plea for multiple and spacious identities. Plurality of identity and freedom to make a rational choice are central to his vision.<sup>19</sup> Sen argues that our affiliations with different collectivities give us different identities, one as important as the other. While invoking a particular identity, we make a choice relevant to a given situation and context. The varying significance of a particular identity is related to the importance that we attach to it when encountering different kinds of people and situation. Though our choices are constrained at times, yet, there is no escape from our making a rational choice and prioritizing our diverse identities.<sup>20</sup> Upholding the centrality of religious pluralism and identities in the personal and social lives of the vast majority of people, it is invoking religious identity in politics that is problematic—'the weight attached to religious identity has to be separated from its significance in the political contexts'.<sup>21</sup>

The wisdom implicit in Sen's analysis is a cherished legacy of Kashmiri men and women. It has come down to them from Lal Ded who lived at a time when Kashmir was passing through cataclysmic changes. Said she:

"*Mav zan Hyond ta Musalman.*"

(Do not discriminate between Hindus and Muslims.)

## Women's Identity and Politics in Jammu and Kashmir

Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal

"The personal is political." That was one of the strongest slogans during the women's liberation movements in the West in the 1960s. Feminists who began playing a central role in all the civil liberties movement came under sharp criticism, by both their male and female comrades, for demanding a more decisive role in issues of peace and justice on grounds that these were 'personal issues of the women'. How could women be so selfish, it was asked, to focus on their personal disgruntlement when Black people were denied voting privileges in Mississippi, peasants were being napalmed in Vietnam, and students were treated as numbers in large faceless bureaucratic universities? The women, in response, claimed that personal lives were not personal at all but characterized by power and fraught with political meaning. Women argued the assumptions that they were followers and men leaders, that women naturally were 'better' with children and men 'better' at organizing, that women should type and men should discuss issues; that all these assumptions were deeply political, denying women not only equality within progressive movements, but even more basically, the freedom to choose for themselves what they could

and should think and do. When most men and some of the women involved within the 60s movements refused to listen, many women left the movement to, as they put it at the time, 'organize around our own oppression'.<sup>1</sup> They began a liberation movement dedicated to eliminating the ways in which women were constrained and harmed by sexist assumptions and behaviour.

Gender identity in Jammu and Kashmir, however, continues to play a subservient role to the larger political identity based on caste, religion and regional divides. The personal may be political here as well. But the personal again gets divided on the lines of larger masculine-endorsed categories of caste, colour and creed. It would be difficult to assume all women to share a common identity. The case of Jammu and Kashmir, with all its multi-ethnic lines criss-crossing against each other, becomes all the more complicated with gender pushed to the margins. There are Dogras, Gujjars, Paharis, Bhaderwahis, Punjabis, Ladakhis and Kashmiris. At the same time, they are also Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians. A woman at all times is not just a woman. Her political identity is thus determined not just by the gender, which plays a subservient role, but more by the political discourse with a predominant male influence. The personal—her oppressive status legally, in work place, socially, etc—plays second fiddle and becomes political only as long as it does not clash with the interests of other predominant political identities.

The Jammu and Kashmir state, as explained earlier, is a complex mélange of several cultures. The multi-ethnicity and plurality of the state forbids women from being categorized as a single entity. Besides, the hegemonic tendencies within communities and ethnicities, encouraged and supported by political tendencies and the state, further tend to marginalize the women, forbidding women to construct or carve out a visible space in the social or political hierarchy. The women either do not exist or play a negligible role and continue to play the subservient traditional roles of mothers, daughters, sisters and wives. This commonality, however, prevents women from grouping

themselves together. They remain divided, the divisions reinforced by their religion, the language they speak or the area they hail from.

This would appear to be a universal trend, not just in South Asia but round the globe. But in Kashmir, where conflict runs parallel to the rise of democracy, and where political rights and development are exercised more in breach, the women's presence becomes all the more invisible. This has been particularly so in the last 16 years of the conflict, with violence spreading from the borders to the interiors, forbidding a space for women in different regions of the state for different reasons. The women are not only marginalized but also victimized. The victimization is exercised at two levels—one due to state or other non-state agencies amidst the political conflict, positioning women at a disadvantageous place; second, due to the patriarchal set-ups that deny women the right to seek justice against victimization despite a legal set-up in place. The large scale cases of rapes and molestation of women at the hands of militants, security forces and their sponsored gunmen manifests this syndrome of division the best.

As Gyanendra Pandey, while talking about how different communities and nations position themselves in the aftermath of violence, points out: "Nations and communities that would be nations seem to deal with the moment of violence—by the relatively simple stratagem of drawing a neat boundary around themselves, distinguishing sharply between 'us' and 'them' and pronouncing the act of violence as an act of the other or an act necessitated by a threat to the self."<sup>2</sup>

Take for example Shahnaz's case: Shahnaz Kouser was abducted by militants in the early years of militancy for six months. She was raped, tortured and drugged, and also began to work for them.<sup>3</sup> When she handed over one of the militants to the police, the latter rescued her and handed her over to Intelligence Bureau (IB), who whisked her to Delhi. For two years, she not only worked for them but was subjected to the same treatment that militants meted out to her. Finally, she came to Jammu and got married. But the nightmare followed her.

When her husband got to know that she had been raped by both the militants and the IB men, he abandoned her, also leaving behind two children. Interestingly, when she was rescued from militants, the police and the Hindu right wing in Jammu region, including the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak (RSS) supported Nari Jagran Manch, a woman's group took great pains to highlight the issue in their bid to demonize the militants and talk about how 'Muslim women suffer due to Islam or Muslims'. However, they later abandoned her and allowed her to suffer a repeated fate at the hands of the IB men. Shahnaz's story is a grim reminder of how easy it becomes for a woman's tragedy to be usurped, manipulated and subverted by political organizations and individuals for their narrow interests and relegate the victim to the background. The collective strength of civil society crumbles as political parties, bureaucrats and other vested interests project one kind of victimization, thus subjecting women to another kind as well.

It is ironical to find out how women can also sometimes justify rape in the name of 'national interest'. In the three Hindu-dominated districts of Jammu region in the south of Jammu and Kashmir, where a large number of men join the defence forces and para-military forces, such allegations of rape in the Valley by security forces are sometimes unpalatable for women, the security forces legitimize any human rights violation including acts of sexual violation against women on basis of a crude logic—that either there are tremendous pressures on the soldiers in the conflict, or the allegations are leveled by 'unprincipled' Kashmiri women. This is not much different from the official line. Most cases of rape allegations have been dismissed by the army officers on the same logic, stating that the victims were related to militants without any independent or transparent investigations.

There would roughly be two opposite positions on how rape as a weapon of war is regarded in Jammu and Kashmir—the perspective of women from the affected areas and one of the women from the lesser affected areas like Jammu district, parts of Kathua and Udhampur. But that again would be an oversimplification. In the initial years of militancy, when the sudden reports of gross rape and molestation

of women, which was a new phenomenon, shocked the ethnic Kashmiris, some women in Jammu region justified the acts of the security forces and vilified the Kashmiri women. But there could be no generalizations. The pattern was not universal. There were different streaks of opinions among Jammu women. Similarly, in the Valley, even despite the protests against rapes and molestations, it was the woman who strangely remained marginalized in the entire gamut of things.

One of the first ever cases highlighted was that of gang rapes by the security forces; this happened in 1991, in Konanposhpura, a village in north Kashmir. It was for the first time that the use of women as tools of vengeance in the turmoil was brought to focus. While the latter went scot-free, despite the fact that media highlighted the issue, women of the village do not only reel under the trauma of what happened but also face the brunt of an apathetic society; they are stigmatized and abandoned forever, by their husbands, government and the civil society. No woman in the village was married after the incident for several years. Some victims were also abandoned by their husbands. For several years, no schools were opened in the village.

When the case was first brought to light, people were outraged, but later slipped into a mode of complacency and apathy. The security forces were given a clean chit and so, even as people shuddered to think about the incident, the victimized women of the village were left to a life of misery and stigma. One cannot forget the damage the Press Council of India report did after the Konanposhpura gang rapes in north Kashmir evoked public outrage. The one-man fact-finding team headed by BG Verghese, heavily protected by security forces, spent three hours in the area and the final report gave a clean chit to the security forces on pleas and pretexts like: "when the girls were asked whether any rapes had been committed, they giggled in response." The insult added to the injury. Victimization of women, like in any other conflict area, has become the norm. But civil society's response set the mode of indifference and apathy that continues even today.

As recently as 2003, in the urban hub of Shopian in South Kashmir, college girls were molested in broad day light by security

forces. Though the incident did spark huge demonstrations, the police had to use fire to dispel the crowd. The victimized girls had to face two fronts—the army and their family members, who strongly disapproved of their audacity for making it a public issue. The public response is almost uniform, whether it is the educated elite or the illiterate men or women. Another shocking episode took place in Handwara in north Kashmir, in July 2004. Following an attack, police officers arrested a teenage girl and subjected her to third degree torture. The incident sparked off protests in Handwara and was widely condemned throughout Kashmir. When the incident took place, mainstream and separatist leaders made a beeline to the area to vie with each other in offering sympathies to the people over the incident. Sajjad Lone, leader of a separatist organization People's Conference, and known for his progressive outlook, addressed a gathering there. In a highly emotionally charged speech, he maintained, "Those who have tortured the girl should not think that their women are safe. If the government will not take action in this case, we will bring her justice."<sup>4</sup> What harm have the women of police officers done to anybody? Or what harm had the tortured girl done to any police officer? The act of the policemen and the retaliatory statement by this separatist leader is a manifestation of where the women in Kashmir stand—used as weapons of vengeance, like footballs by the two major teams, security forces on one side and the militants on the other.

Though this article is not about the plight of the women in the state, it is important to see how women's identities and politics shape themselves around the plight they are in, due to traditional practices or an enforced conflict. It is equally significant to note the response of the civil society in cases of rapes, where women again play a marginal role, and allow the entire discourse of rape to be defined on the parameters of 'outraging modesty' of the woman who is upheld as a symbol of virtues and honour of the male members of her family and community. The near-absenteeism of women activism outside the traditional political organizations makes the masculine interpretation

of rape and its abuse a political ploy, the predominant feature. Neither the rape, nor the protests that follow are created in vacuum. Conflicts are known to throw up situations like these the world over. History bears testimony to use of women's bodies as weapons of war. The victimization takes place at two levels. It does not stop only at the physical sexual violation. It is coupled with psychological violation exercised by political groups who shape their protests against the guilty, more in a bid to malign the other side than to seek justice for the woman. At another level, psychological violation begins at the home or neighbourhood of the victim, where the violation of honour in a patriarchal set-up becomes paramount to victimization. Kashmir is no exception.

This 'honour' discourse in rapes has masculine connotations. At one level, the definition of rapes as a violation of woman's honour and dignity tends to stigmatise the woman and make her psychological ostracization from society easier. At another level, it is the male honour, hurt and bruised, that tends to take precedence over the suffering and stymie the women's victimization. It is interesting how this politics of rape and the aftermath proceeds, putting woman in a doubly disadvantageous position, where she seems to be deprived of not just a chance to move on with her life with dignity but also a right to grieve. Victimization becomes eternal, something which is even glamorized, contradicting with the syndrome of stigma, in form of protests and documentation of human rights abuse. The victim is forgotten and expected not to exist.

This is primarily because the violation of sexual rights of the women is redefined in the context of violation of rights and honour of a particular community or ethnic group. The protests that follow cases of rapes and molestations are an indication. The women voices are missing or marginalized, or in fact follow the male chauvinistic discourse of 'honour', which puts the entire onus of rapes on the victim itself. The activities and statements of the Dukhtaran-e-Millat, women's wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami in Kashmir, best epitomizes

this syndrome. The Dukhtaran chief has been very consistent in protesting against rapes and sermonizing with statements and articles in newspaper about the kind of dress code the women should be adhering to in a bid to avoid rapes. Her statements have been critical of women who are unable to protect themselves against rapes by armed men. She prescribes the *burqa* and loose-fitted Islamic garments, which she describes as deterrents for rapists, an argument that is both ridiculous and ludicrous.

Take for instance the case of the Badar Payein-Handwara rapes in November 2004. During a routine crackdown, an Army Major is alleged to have raped a woman and her 10-year old daughter, in Badar Payein, a village in Handwara in north Kashmir. The incident followed the typical tradition of two extremes. On one side was the state defending the accused army personnel (a cosmetic court martial proceedings that held the accused Major guilty of what was described as 'misconduct' would be injustice in the face of connotations of rape or molestation for women victims). On the other hand, protests by separatist leaders, cashing in on the anti-forces sentiments and mainstream leaders protesting in a bid to vie with the separatists for some limelight. In the midst of all this were statements by the Dukhtaran chief Aasiya Andrabi. While condemning the incident, she stated that the women need to protect themselves against rape without suggesting how. But the onus of blame of rapes was obviously intended to be shared by the women as well—unarmed, helpless women against the armed men. Editorial comments and some articles in local newspapers in Kashmir also seemed to strangely seek inspiration from this ideology. There were long sermons in some newspapers on how women should protect themselves from rapes by dressing up modestly, cover their heads and bodies properly. That was expected to stop the rapists in their boots. What about the 10 year olds? How were they expected to dress up? Nobody wished to write anything about the vulnerability of children, young girls, to rape. The multiplicity of victimhood seemed to be exercised at another level as well. Unlike the

initial years of militancy, the army was keen to keep a clean image, which explains the court martial proceedings and its willingness to adopt the victimized woman, her daughter and their family, which they seemed to be doing more as a hegemonic exercise, harassing the family with their daily visits in the hope that the victimized woman would accept the charity. It needs to be understood that any acceptance of the official benevolence would have added to the stigma of the women in question.

Between these two extreme positions, the women's identity, even as a victim of rape and molestation, gets diluted and resurfaces only with heavy doses of stigmatization. The right to grieve is further denied when rapes are acknowledged on the basis of who the perpetrator and the victim is, forbidding one kind of rape victim to find any kind of solidarity with that of another kind. The politicization of rapes makes it important for different players to see who the rapist is and who is being raped. Is the perpetrator a security force personnel, a surrendered ultra or a militant from a banned organization? And is the victim a Hindu, Muslim, relative of militant or of a security forces informer? The manner in which official data on rapes in conflict is collated illustrates this point.

Statistics compiled by Crime Branch of police states 936 women were killed by militants since 1990. 125 of these were abducted and killed. Another 132 women were abducted and freed and many of these were also raped, though no numbers are as yet compiled. However, the cases of rapes by security forces are not even acknowledged. A top police officer maintained, there are only 20 cases of rapes registered since 1990 against security forces in which 4 cases were proved and 14 security men were punished. It is pertinent to mention that one does not know how this data is collected since most reports are not lodged by the victims. Crime Branch of police maintains that all these cases were registered on basis of complaints based on either observations of National Human Rights Commission, State Human Rights Commission or news reports. There were no direct complaints

lodged by victims. The police records are obviously misleading. The number of rape cases filed in Konanposhpora in 1990 is much higher. *Asia Watch*, in its report in 1992, quotes a much higher number of rapes and molestation in the same year itself. Though, it does not give a specific number, it gives a list of at least 30-odd cases, elaborating the details of the allegations and the official investigations or government statements that followed in each case. One case of mass rape in Shopian typifies the response with the mention of a government statement that "two of the women alleged to have been raped were wives of terrorists viz., Takub Hussain, a Platoon Commander of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, and Mohd Yakub, a Group Commander of the same militant group". *Asia Watch* maintains that one of the ways security forces in Kashmir use rape is as a weapon against women suspected of being sympathetic to or related to alleged militants. While we do not know whether such suspicions motivated the soldiers responsible for the rape of these women, it is clear that the authorities intend to use the accusation that the women associated with 'terrorists' both to discredit the women's testimony and implicitly shirk responsibility for the abuse. Moreover, even if the women were affiliated with any militant group, this in no way justifies the use of rape by security personnel. When countered with *Asia Watch* report, the police officials maintain that *Asia Watch* has its own agenda to put the security forces in poor light. The allegations, mentioned by *Asia Watch*, do not figure anywhere in the official records. The victims of rape thus do not only lose their right to grieve but also a right to exist.

At the same time, those who support a separatist agenda would deny the existence of rapes by militants. It is equally interesting to note the competing claims of some that the rapes by security forces are higher than militants or vice versa. In the light of lack of transparency and no documentation, it is impossible to arrive at any conclusions. The fact remains that most cases of rapes are not even reported, mostly for fear of stigma or the manner in which investigations take place without an element of fairness. The woman does not figure in

the entire gamut of conflict, even as a victim. If she does, it is only in the traditional role of a mother, daughter, sister or a wife. In many militancy-infected rural areas, where people get sandwiched between insurgency and counter insurgency operations, large scale temporary dislocations are provoked, with villagers moving out to neighbouring villages or nearby towns. The men move out and the women stay back or visit their homes and fields everyday for work. The men rarely go because they say they are under potential threat. But they fail to recognize any level of threat perception, either from militants or security forces, to the women. There are no compiled statistics, but doctors in some of the militancy infested areas maintain that the incidence of abortions, after rapes, is very high, especially in the rural areas. But the women's voices are often absent.

The levels of absence vary on lines of cultural graphs. While the Kashmir Valley witnesses protests by women against rapes or custodial killings and torture cases, the women in militancy hit areas of Jammu region are more conspicuous by their absence – more in Rajouri-Poonch than in Doda, where cultural and linguistic ties also overlap to some extent with Kashmir. While the graph of protests shows a variance on regional patterns, the kind of protests in which women figure prominently also makes an interesting case study. The protests would be much feebler in cases of rapes and molestations, where a woman is seeking justice for herself. But, it becomes more strengthened in cases of torture and custodial killings or missing youth, where women come forward not just in the traditional role of mothers, daughters and sisters but also enter the public domain as household heads. This reflects the centrality of the patriarchal set-up even in the role as protestors that women politically assume in the conflict. This has its own limitations as the women seem to enter the political domain only in the hierarchy of agitationists—on the streets or in the more organized form of Association of the Parents of the Disappeared (APDP) and Kashmir Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy (both are sister organizations involved in human rights issues).

The only other role that the women tend to play in the conflict is more militarized. Though there is no known evidence of women receiving arms training and joining the ranks of militants, there have been unconfirmed reports about a handful of girls (which are merely stray cases and not more than a dozen) having taken up arms. The Hill Kaka area (where the women were armed as village defence committee members for the first time) is an aberration. However, the militant outfits find more supporters in women, who have been deliberately occupying public space and shielding men from the ire of the security forces, than men. The first organized movement was perhaps in the form of Dukhtaran-e-Millat, which drew inspiration from Islamic reforms and enforced the purdah. The organization has been operating with little mass base but has been managing its presence with first its role in 1990 in enforcing the purdah, when it began its activities of throwing paint on the faces of unveiled women. The organization denies charge of throwing acid on girls. The Dukhtaran, which managed to stay alive in public memory all these years through statements and rallies, once again occupied centre stage in the summer of 2005 by cracking down on sex rackets. Ironically, its activists went around Srinagar city raiding restaurants and claimed to have caught several men and women red-handed. But ironically while the men were allowed to go, the women picked up in the raid seemed to be the greater target.

Along with Dukhtaran, the Muslim Khawateen Markaz (MKM), that began its activities as a social organization, again inspired by Islamic reforms but against strict enforcement of the purdah, in 1986 entered the political domain in 1990 after 50 innocent civilians were gunned down in South Kashmir by security forces. But unlike the Dukhtaran, MKM activities were not militant in nature. The MKM, however, is an ally of the Hurriyat Conference, where it finds space, but a marginalized one. Interestingly, the Hurriyat has a presence of women representatives in its executive meetings, where they participate without interfering in decision making.

The woman presence has been predominant in the armed internal conflict period, more in Kashmir Valley than other parts of the state. Rita Manchanda asserts that the political mobilization of women in the conflict actually began with domestic activism, where women, in their day to day lives, were engaged in 'negotiations of power with security forces for rescue and safety of their families.'<sup>5</sup> However this role was restricted largely to that of an agitationist and the central theme is always the patriarchal system of society. The women were in the centre stage in supporting the armed struggle, and willingly sent their sons and brothers to join the ongoing struggle in Kashmir, and they also played a major role in most protests against human rights violations, often acting as human shields for men during crackdowns and searches. Ironically, one does not find the men doing the same for women before incidences of rapes and molestations.

The women's political activism is thus limited to protection of the families within the traditional cultural roles, failing to question the stereo-types of culture and religion or building solidarities with women issues and activism in other regions of the state. Rita Manchanda argues that the absence of autonomous and secular women's groups in Kashmir limits the possibility of independent activism and the possibility of transcending communalization of struggle. The political space for women thus becomes limited. It is articulated more through communal organizations like the Dukhtaran-e-Millat, Daughters of Vitasta (a Panun Kashmir women's wing) and Nari Jagran Manch.

The most symbolic form of women militarization, the Dukhtaran, opposes both women opting for militancy and a role in politics. In last year's municipal elections, when the government, for the first time, reserved 33 per cent seats for women candidates, the move was vociferously opposed by Dukhtaran Chief, Asiya Andrabi, who felt that for a woman to come out in the political and public domain was fraught with dangers and made her vulnerable to sexual harassment. It seems like history repeats itself. As Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz,<sup>6</sup> writing about women's role in the pre-1947 era, mentions how women were



in the forefront—coming out on the roads and protesting during the Quit Kashmir movement—but later they simply went back to their shell and failed to demand a share in decision-making. Things may have marginally changed ever since, with organizations like the APDP seeking a greater political role, though its scope seems to be limited in its agitationist form again. The organization, which has created a well knit mass base networking, has women from all over the Valley as its members inclusive of both literate and illiterate, is working on the issue of disappearances and seeking legal recourse to provide justice to the parents, children and half-widows (women whose husbands have disappeared and are believed to be dead but there is no evidence for the same). The APDP has documented the cases of persons who were picked up by security forces, are believed to be killed in custody but without any evidence and knowledge about their whereabouts. In doing so, it has taken a strong political stand. Though, the organization has some male members, it is predominantly the women presence that keeps it going.

While militarization of women has no evidence, there is reason to believe that there is an increasing presence of women in the role of informers, couriers and sources—working both for the militants and the security forces. In the initial years of militancy, it was a trend to brand and label every woman in a burqa as an informer of the militants. Even women who reached the camps of security forces, often to seek the whereabouts of their missing or arrested sons and husbands, ran the risk of being branded as agents from both sides. They were looked upon with skepticism by security forces and by the militant groups or supporters of militant organizations, often even in their homes as well. Nonetheless, the increasing role of women as informers, which became more distinct in the post 1996 era, cannot be negated. Shahnaz Kouser, who first worked for the militants and later the security agencies, best personifies the syndrome in which women often enter the public domain as a liberating experience and find themselves trapped. The abductions and forced marriages

of women are directly or indirectly connected to their major role as informers. In fact, women domination in role of informers and couriers enhanced with the coinciding of corruption and malpractices in the ranks of militant organizations and the Indian agencies adding to the confusion with their own sponsored organization and surrendered ultras. The increasingly militarized the civilian areas became, the easier it was for women to fall to the bait and jump into the public domain, where the lure of asserting themselves economically and with a sense of power first brings them out till they finally get trapped. In most cases, women working for militant groups are arrested, though no official reports are lodged, and owing to their knowledge and training about the local geography and the affairs of militant groups, they are co-opted by security agencies to work for them. The trend is universal throughout the state, mostly in the badly militancy infested areas, more in Poonch district. It is not known whether this is being done by choice or under some compulsion.

Women in mainstream politics have been more marginalized with the significance of an agitationist role for women diminishing in the post 1947 scenario. Women have grouped together in struggles and then relegated themselves to the four walls of their homes. But even this tradition does not appear to be universal. While public space for women in a political role is more conspicuous in Kashmir Valley, it is hardly witnessed in Jammu region, barring Poonch, where women were known to have played a role in the pre-Partition politics and post-Partition communal riots and then gradually slipped back into the shadows. Though, not quite playing a political role in the ongoing insurgency, the presence of women in the public domain cannot be denied. This is unlike other militancy infested areas of Jammu region like Rajouri, Doda and Udhampur where women participation in politics, neither in decision-making nor in the role of a protestor is known. Jammu and Kathua district have been comparatively notorious for their lack of political culture and it may be due to this reason that women find a qualitative role in politics—separatist, agitationist or

mainstream. Ironically, all mainstream parties have their own women's wings and women members. But the most powerful voice in several decades has been that of Mehbooba Mufti.

Mehbooba symbolizes a new phase in the culture of politics in Jammu and Kashmir, underlining the space and acceptability of a woman in politics, not just as a participant but as a decision maker. Mehbooba, who heads a major regional party People's Democratic Party, may have entered active politics by fluke, winning on a Congress ticket for the only reason that she happened to be Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's daughter. Later when her father floated People's Democratic Party, she broke away from Congress and joined a party that took up the plea of human rights and favoured a dialogue with all sections of society including separatists. Mehbooba was perhaps the first mainstream politician to have brought the human rights issue into the political ambit, defining the Kashmir problem as not just a political one but also a human one. It is the woman, who becomes central in Mehbooba's bid to make the humanitarian issue of killings and violence political. The move has helped her create a base in the Valley, especially with women's support, in the mid and late 90s, when human rights abuse was not being recognized either by New Delhi or the government headed by Farooq Abdullah. Strangely, this politics of humanitarianism, which reaches out to larger number of women has been more iconified than exercised on the ground. Nonetheless, her role cannot be negated in the backdrop of a poor history of women's participation in active politics; stemming from various reasons like lack of literacy, conservatism and in the last 19 years, the conflict. This makes Sheikh Abdullah's Naya Kashmir manifesto, which provides for equal rights to women and advocates against any kind of gender discrimination, an irony in the face of the real picture.

Yet, the women have been making attempts to create a niche in politics. The participation of women in active mainstream politics has dwindled over the years but women have come to the fore in the local bodies elections that ensured some reservation for women. The reservation policy does not simplify the process of participation for

women, who are still disadvantaged and have to run the added risk of defying the families and several threats in a violent ridden society before entering politics. Though the National Panchayat (Village Council) Act of 1989 guaranteed one-third reservation for women, during the elections in Jammu and Kashmir five years ago, the results were dismal. Of the 22,700 elected posts, only 68 *panches* and 2 *sarpanches* were women, most of them from Jammu and Ladakh. The results were far more encouraging from a women's perspective in the municipal elections in 2005. What is equally enlightening is the growing political consciousness of women transcending all kinds of regional, communal and rural or urban divides. Even in the remotest village, where literacy has made even a marginal presence, women have begun to regularly listen to the radio news and even discuss it with their neighbours and families. The voting patterns may still follow the same old male chauvinistic regime with the patriarchal head of each household deciding how the entire family must exercise their right to franchise, nonetheless, the growing levels of consciousness, which is a recent trend, could gradually encourage women to come forward and participate actively in politics and governance. Albeit, this is too small a step and if the Ladakh trends are studied, the picture may not sound all that optimistic. In Ladakh, unlike in other parts of the region, there is a greater level of participation of people at the grassroots, the people at the lower rung of society vested with unspecified powers to keep a check on what happens at the top. The women have been extremely active, playing a predominant role in politics and social activism at the grass-roots. But when it comes to power, the women take a back seat. Consider the women participation in the assembly or the parliament from Ladakh. Or, closer home, consider the women's participation in the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council executive. These are some contradictions that need a closer scrutiny. Due to paucity of available resources and research material, this author and this article are unable to perform this task.

However, the political activism of women has not been able to arrest the trend of dividing them on caste and regional lines,

a reflection of which can be aptly seen in the politics revolving around the Permanent Residency Bill (for women) politics. The PR Bill, disqualifying women marrying outside the state of Jammu and Kashmir from citizenship rights, was tabled in the Jammu and Kashmir legislature in March 2004, and passed unanimously, without a whimper, in the Assembly, which has a brute majority of men. Though it was voted against in the upper house of the state legislature, it was not before politicizing what was essentially a gender issue. The saner women voices were lost in the din of political sloganeering which tended to put the issue in the hierarchy of Jammu versus Valley category. All political parties had their own stakes, which were not only played up but also misinterpreted, to keep the women in the two regions of the state divided over the issue. While BJP and Congress vied for attention opposing the bill, even after voting in favour of the same in the Assembly, National Conference and People's Democratic Party made it a bone of contention in the Valley, where sentiments were raked up against the bill, projecting it as a savior of dilution of special status of the state and Article 370. In the ongoing conflict where alienation is deep-rooted, it was easy to create such insecurities in the minds of women. Even progressive women were unable to challenge the logic behind this.

The fears were not so misplaced in the light of the fact that for years Hindu right wing organizations in India have floated the idea of changing the demographics of Jammu and Kashmir to solve the dispute. The women's perspective remained missing, falling prey to a patriarchal political system. Women groups like the Nari Jagran Manch in Jammu and Dukhtaran-e-Millat in the Valley, as well as women wings of various political parties took the centre stage. The highly politicized protests in Jammu against the bill forced the Valley women to come out on the streets and counter it. The audible women voices from Valley said the Bill was pro-Kashmiri in nature and any move to drop it would pave way for outsiders and multi-national companies to come and settle here. The voices in Jammu, which have never espoused the

women cause, suddenly projected themselves as the vanguards of gender justice and all kinds of propaganda was being unleashed—that only Jammu women stand to lose if the Bill was passed and that Kashmiris never marry outsiders. Not only was the gender issue being diverted but consciously an attempt was being made to vitiate the atmosphere on communal lines. The intelligentsia in Jammu, especially women, tried to put this issue in perspective but failed; mostly because it was unable to understand the dilemma of the women on the other side of the divide. The divisions were rooted in prejudiced histories on both sides and sparked off more anger on an issue where women from the two sides could have seen a common ground.

Though it is impossible for all women to be categorized as one group because of the multiple identities they have, it is interesting to see how the natural divisions are honed and played up to not only to keep the women divided on several issues but forbid them to challenge the patriarchal polity and society. Joan D Mandle, a feminist writer, sees this trend of identity politics building solidarity and loyalty within one's own group as damaging in the process of creating social change. "The assertion of one's selfhood, concern with one's own self-esteem, as well as group loyalty become ends, the primary goals of political expression... This exaggerated loyalty, then, also serves as an obstacle to the creation of an inclusive and thoughtful feminist politics."

Second, whether it is participation of women in politics, rapes or the citizenship rights, there is a tendency to put woman in a particular hierarchy of victimhood, or at least as somebody so fragile that needs a male-dominated set up to take care of her interests. In fact, the woman's role as a victim is often so glamourized that it has forbidden the evolution of women's identity as distinct from the male one in any community, caste or region of the state. As feminist writer Naomi Wolf,<sup>7</sup> describing this trend as victim feminism, maintains that this attempt to turn suffering and persecution into something attractive absolves individuals of the political responsibility to act to change their own condition. She argues that this is consistent with the explosion of

self-help programmes and talk shows to endorse publicly the victimized status of women, projecting this as a solution and thus delegitimizing the serious political changes which many such problems require for their elimination. Rita Manchanda<sup>8</sup>, pointing out to the ambiguities of women activism and identity politics in Kashmir case, maintains, 'conflict brings into heightened focus ambiguities in Kashmiri women's negotiations with the public sphere of nationalist and ethnic identity politics, as reflected in politics of veiling and reaching out across the religious divide.' She also reasons that much of these is due to absence of autonomous, secular groups and because there is a lack of capacity to build solidarities with women's and human rights movements in India and other parts of South Asia, stemming from the xenophobia in the minds of Kashmiri Muslims, reinforced by the conflict. However, she also maintains, quoting example of both Hindu and Muslim women making a bid to rescue a Hindu boy from militants, that women's exclusion from political identity struggles, also fosters a women's agency in neutral spaces on humanitarian grounds to reach out across a hostile ethnic divide. This would suggest the potential capacity for women to transcend the traditional community identity politics and the communalization of struggle. This may, probably, be absent because of a lack of clear political vision in several women initiatives that have come to the fore in various parts of Jammu and Kashmir in the last two decades or so.

## Gender Identity and Women in Amarnath Agitation

Vibhuti Ubbott

Jammu's regional discontent can be located in three different factors. First of all, there's a strong ideological opposition to article 370, which gives special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The common feeling among those who are raising the demand of abrogation of article 370 is that it would reduce the autonomy of the state, and in the process, the epicenter of power in Jammu and Kashmir will shift away from Srinagar, and Jammu will move closer to Delhi. Jammu region witnessed popular upsurge in 1952 to abolish the entry permit system to the state as well as for *ek pradhan*, *ek vidhan*, and *ek nishan* (One flag and one Constitution for the entire nation, including Jammu and Kashmir). It was the first agitation in Jammu region that divided Jammu and Kashmir on regional lines. A similar ideological stand has also been taken by political parties like BJP and Shiv Sena, which demand the abolition of any kind of special status granted to the state by virtue of article 370.

A feeling of deprivation in the power structure of the state is another reason of discontent in Jammu region. The popular argument which is extended in Jammu is that Jammu and Ladakh are much

bigger in area as well as population, but have had fewer seats in the State Assembly as well as Lok Sabha. Actually, the way the politics of the state is structured, Jammu's political elite do not get their due share in Kashmir-dominated power framework which leads to resentment among them.<sup>1</sup> This resentment, too, had a greater role to play in the Amarnath agitation.

Another major irritant emanates from the perception that there is unequal distribution of resources at the regional level. It has been alleged that the grants received by the state from the Centre are not distributed evenly among the three regions, and that Kashmir is the prime beneficiary of all sorts of economic and developmental resources of the state. This feeling is represented time and again with regard to employment, admission to professional institutions and similar kinds of issues. The region's past is replete with instances of outbursts of the people. The shutting down of the ayurvedic and agricultural colleges in Jammu evoked a strong agitation by students in 1966, in which five students were killed. There was good number of protests in 1979 in Poonch, alleging discrepancies in the selection process of government teachers. Similarly, advocates of Jammu led a month-long *Durbar* move protest in 1986. The reason was the permanent shifting of 19 government offices to Kashmir.

To pacify Jammu's population, some commissions were constituted by the state government, like the Gajendragadkar Commission (1967), the Kadri Commission (1972), the Sikri Commission (1979), and the Wazir Commission (1981). The Gajendragadkar Commission, set up to look into the grievances of the people of Jammu and to inquire the regional discrimination in the state, admitted the presence of a regional divide in the state and suggested the formation of separate development boards for different regions. The commission has given a number of recommendations to address the issue of growing suspicion among the regions towards each other. In fact, for quite some time now, the issue of regional autonomy has been gaining ground in the state. Hence, a long-held feeling of discrimination that has been a part

of the political psyche of Jammu got manifested when the Amarnath agitation took place in Jammu.

The controversy, which led to a wide-scale agitation later, started with the transferring of 100 acres of land in Baltal to the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) by the state government of Jammu and Kashmir on 26 May 2008. The land was to be used to set up pre-fabricated shelters and other facilities for pilgrims. There was an immediate response from Kashmir, as the people of Kashmir and the separatists alleged that it was a deliberate attempt to alter the demography of the Kashmir Valley as the land will be ultimately used to settle Hindus from outside the state. Land transference was also opposed on the premise that it would destroy the region's ecology. As a result, the land transfer decision was revoked on 1 July 2008, which triggered counter protests in Jammu region for cancellation of the revocation order. The government led by Ghulam Nabi Azad, the first chief minister of the state from Jammu region, also fell down as People's Democratic Party (PDP) withdrew support.

In Jammu, no time was taken by parties like BJP, Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal and RSS in launching mass protests against the government. Subsequently, a new front called Shri Amarnath Yatra Sangharsh Samiti (SAYSS) was formed to lead the protests for reinstatement of land to the SASB. The protests were intensified when an activist from Jammu, Kuldeep Raj Verma, committed suicide on 22 July 2008. Curfew was imposed in almost all parts of Jammu region and the army was called to contain the situation. The agitation lasted for 62 days and there was the longest ever *bandh* of 39 days in large parts of Jammu region. Finally, an agreement was struck between SAYSS and the representatives of the state government on 31 August 2008, in which the Shrine Board was allowed to use 40 hectares of land during the *Yatra* period.

"Though a religious demand for restoration of land to a Hindu shrine was the rallying point of the protest, it got popular support on account of the widespread feeling that Jammu had been discriminated

against, in every field and department, by the successive governments for last 60 years." (Balraj Puri, 2008) It became evident from the fact that while the Amarnath agitation was concentrated in the districts of Hindu majority in Jammu region, including Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Samba and Reasi, the leaders of a few Muslim associations of these districts also extended their support to the agitation as they shared the regional grievances with the Hindus of the area. As far as the Muslim majority districts were concerned, the Hindu population from these districts did join the agitation, but some occasional tensions also brewed up between Hindu and Muslim communities in some of these areas.

In the post-1947 period, with the exception of Praja Parishad in 1952, it was a rare juncture of simultaneous protests taking place in the two regions of the state, escalating inter-regional tensions. The agitation remained significant in two respects. Unlike earlier agitations that were confined to the city of Jammu, this agitation was spread all over the Hindu heartland. Towns like Akhnoor and RS Pura saw massive agitations with mass mobilization. Not only towns but rural areas too presented scenes of widespread agitation. The scale of the agitation was so large that the participation extended to even Dalits and women. The turnout of the women of Jammu, in such a large number, in the agitation, was unprecedented in the history of the region. The mobilization and the enthusiasm displayed by the women of Jammu were so exceptional that they demand a deeper probe.

The women of Jammu region, as elsewhere, have been subject to very strong patriarchal norms. The caste factor pervades among the Hindus in the region and the society is largely conservative and patrilineal. So strong are the patriarchal and caste-cultural factors, that these even extend to the Muslims of the region.<sup>2</sup>

The influence of patriarchy is felt most severely amongst the high caste Dogra Hindus of the region. There is a prevalence of strong purdah system among them, and in fact, the dominant caste among the Hindu Dogras, the Rajputs, are known to have the tradition of

female infanticide in the region. As compared to women from higher castes, lower castes and low class women have greater mobility and freedom. The women of another ethnic group, the Gujjars, seem to be at a very better position compared to their counterparts in the region. Since the Gujjar women contribute a significant, in fact, larger share of work and earnings in their homes, lesser restrictions are placed on them. On the face of it, the Gujjar women look empowered and emancipated, but a close scrutiny proves otherwise.<sup>3</sup>

Both in the backward and marginal sections as well as prosperous segments of the population, patriarchy can be seen operating in the region. The women suffer from many gender-specific disabilities like early marriage, low work participation, lower health status, etc. They have been lagging in almost all the indices of growth and well being. The Census of India 2001 places the figures of sex ratio in the state at 900 and in Jammu alone at 881. A comparison between the indices of modernization and reinforcement of patriarchy can be seen in the region, for instance, one can see a relation between the level of literacy and sex ratio. It is pertinent to mention here that in all the districts of the region, the literacy rate is higher in urban centres vis-à-vis rural centres. At the same time, the urban areas display lower sex ratio figures compared to the rural areas of the region. It indicates a typical middle class phenomenon called modernization of patriarchy, wherein the modern means of health technology are indiscriminately used such as sex-selection techniques. Hence, the greater the modernization, the greater the sex-based discrimination.

Despite all the discriminations faced by the women, no gender-based movement has ever taken place in Jammu region. The region virtually lacks a culture of gender politics and there has been no mobilization of women so far. In the first place, the consistent factor, the context of conflict in Kashmir and Jammu's perception of regional discrimination, has eclipsed all kinds of issues in Jammu region other than those related to power politics. Second, on various occasions of protests in Jammu region, there has been negligible presence of women

in them. There is complete absence of women's perspective of the issues in the region. In this context, the role of the Amarnath agitation in the mobilization of women in large numbers in the Jammu region assumes sufficient importance and needs to be properly analyzed.

### Religious Basis of Mobilization and Participation

Since the agitation was primarily for restoration of land to the Amarnath shrine, which is a revered religious place of Hindus, the women from Hindu-dominated districts of the Jammu region participated in it and formed a major support base of the agitation. But women's participation was carrying a peculiar colour and form. Religion and religious leaders had the greatest part to play in bringing the women into the fold of agitation, and therefore, the forms adopted by them were also of religious nature. Instead of public meetings, women used to hold *kirtans*, instead of slogans, *bhajans* (religious songs) were sung, and instead of rallies, *prabhat pheris* (morning processions) were carried out. Though at the same time women did join their men in regular protest activities like taking to the streets, braving police actions, shouting slogans and hurling stones on cops. Tuesday was kept as all women's protest day during the *Jail Bharo Andolan* called by SAYSS. Several thousand women, from all parts of Jammu, made their way into the police stations to court arrest. But the method peculiar to the women was in turning their religious activities. The role of Hindu religious leaders and temples was very prominent in instigating the women to join the agitation in one form or another. In a society, where very less public space is given to the women, temples hold an instrumental value for women to seek presence in public sphere. In the traditional set-up, women were mostly confined to their homes and were subjected to stringent social norms, which were invariably patriarchal in nature. In such a situation, temples and religious places (ashrams) maintained by religious leaders (gurus) provided legitimate entry points for women to enter public

space. All activities and interactions carried by women at these places were considered to be within the limits of their gender roles.

Hence, the religious groups of women (*bhajan mandalis*), the religious heads of various sects (gurus) adopted by women, and the heads of various temples (pandits) played a part in mobilizing women in the Amarnath agitation. There were strong speeches by some of these leaders that provoked the religious sentiments of the people and evoked some very strong reactions amongst them. The name of Dinesh Bharti, the firebrand religious leader, who delivered powerful speeches and religious sermons during the agitation, is worth mentioning in this context.

Traders and service class people, who comprise Jammu's upper-caste middle class, are considered the most conservative sections of the society and yet the majority of women who participated in the agitation were high-caste middle class women. Though upper class, lower class, and lower-caste women also participated, yet the agitation had mainly a middle class character.

The women belonging to different classes used to maintain the class distinctions generally displayed in the society and used to maintain some kind of distance from women of a different class. They also followed different strategies during the agitation. For instance, women belonging to the affluent area of Jammu took out peace marches, holding candles in their hands; the women from a suburb of Jammu beat *dholaks* (drums) and sang *bhajans*. Further, there was difference in the way the women belonging to different parts of society perceived the agitation. For some, it was a purely religious fight while for others, it involved bigger issues.

Three arguments can be extended to explain women's participation in Amarnath agitation. First of all, most of the women were there because of their religious sentiments. Enough religious emotions were raised during the agitation. Second, there was a sense of continuity with their routine religious chores and they did not face any contradiction while participating in the agitation. Their

methodologies were more religious than political. The most important reason for women's participation in the agitation in itself was not defined purely in political terms. It was religious as well as regional. Had the agitation been purely for regional demands and did not carry the religious sentiments within it, it is difficult to imagine if women would have participated in it with such intensity.

However, it cannot be argued that women did not share the regional sentiments. Though women joined in the agitation perceiving it as their religious obligation, but subsequently, as all the debates, speeches and arguments regarding regional discrimination came up, they were overwhelmed by such feelings as well. In fact, the perception of regional discontent is pervasive among all classes of Jammu's society and women share this. So, where the religious reason was reflected in women's response by way of religious slogans of '*bum-bum Bhole*', the regional got reflected in their consciousness as mention was made about the neglect of Jammu in the context of educational and occupational opportunities. However, gender as a reason, never got any sort of reflection in this process of mobilization. Neither personal nor political issues were seen from a gender perspective.

The issue of women's mobilization during the Amarnath agitation may be placed in the larger Indian context. The presence of a public-private dichotomy has been repeatedly emphasized by various scholars. As per this dichotomy, women perform the household work and men occupy the public space where all the productive work and important decisions take place. There are a lot of examples of mobilization of women taking place, even for political purposes, through religion. This tradition could be found in national movement as well. Partha Chatterjee says:

"The discourse of nationalism shows that the material/spiritual distinction was condensed into an analogous, but ideologically far more powerful, dichotomy: that between the outer and the inner. The material domain, argued nationalist writers, lies outside us—a mere external that influences us, conditions us, and forces us to adjust to

it. Ultimately, it is unimportant. The spiritual, which lies within, is our true self; it is that which is genuinely essential. It followed that as long as India took care to retain the spiritual distinctiveness of its culture, it could make all the compromises and adjustments necessary to adapt itself to the requirements of a modern material world without losing its true identity... The world is a treacherous terrain of the pursuit of material interests, where practical considerations reign supreme. It is also typically the domain of the male. The home in its essence must remain unaffected by the profane activities of the material world, and woman is its representation... Once we match this new meaning of the home/world dichotomy with the identification of social roles by gender, we get the ideological framework within which nationalism answered the women's question." (Partha Chatterjee: 1999, pp 120–121)

Hence, the rise of nationalism, particularly Hindu nationalism, coincides with the affirmation of public-private divide in Indian subcontinent.

Indian National Congress, the party which led the freedom struggle in India, drew most of its founder members from high caste Hindu section of the society and 'each took pride in his Hindu culture as faith' (John McLane, 1988:54). To counter the claimed superiority of the Westerners, pride in India's history was sought, and from there started the whole strategy of invoking Hindu Nationalism.

Hindu nationalism is an extremist religious micronationalism of elites, in which elites make strategic political use of elements drawn from one religion to construct an exclusive, homogenized, Other-repressive, 'cultural' nationalist ideology and practice to retain and increase elite power. (Paola Bacchetta: 1999, pp 141–166)

Since a feeling of nationalism was urgently needed in pre-independence period and religion is something that has the power to mobilize masses, so efforts were made to prop nationalism around the religion of the majority in India, that is, Hinduism, and hence the ideology of Hindutva was invented.



At the heart of Hindutva lies the myth of a continuous thousand-year old struggle of Hindus against Muslims as the structuring principle of Indian history. Both communities are assumed to have been homogeneous blocks of Hindu patriots, heroically resisting invariably tyrannical 'foreign' Muslim rulers (Tapan Basu *et al.* 1993).

Satish Deshpande, while explaining how VD Savarkar used the ideology of Hindutva to redefine the nation-state during freedom movement in India, says that:

There was nothing inherent in nationalist spatial strategies that prevented their use by groups based on religion or religious identities. Indeed, there were areas in which religious groups—especially Hindus—were at a significant advantage, because they could build on the powerful base of sacred geographies. (Satish Deshpande: 2000, p 176)

The ideology of Hindutva was rejuvenated in post-Independence period during the Ayodhya movement, when the Babri Masjid was demolished in Ayodhya, a town in eastern Uttar Pradesh, for the construction of a Ram temple. Spearheaded by Hindu parties like RSS and BJP, the movement saw the extensive participation of men and women. The Amarnath agitation can be seen as an extension of the project of Hindutva, in which every attempt was made to seek the affiliation of the Jammu region with India, identifying it as a part of Hindu nation. Hence, in the Amarnath agitation, nationalistic slogans always accompanied religious slogans.

In all the instances mentioned above, where Hindutva identity was invoked to display the nationalistic sentiments, the discourses of gender remained strikingly similar, being influenced by fundamentalism.

The relationship between discourses of religion and women are mutually constituting. Communities are defined in and through the identity of women, while women are defined in and through the identity of their communities. (Ratna Kapur and Brenda Cossman: 1993, pp WS35–WS44)

In the Amarnath issue too, women became the bearers of Jammu's cultural and religious identity. In the post-independence period, Jammu region has always seen itself facing an identity crisis. During the Amarnath flare up, Jammu tried to claim a distinct identity, and while doing so, since the reason invoked was primarily religious, the burden of carrying the cultural identity of Jammu was imposed on women. As Amrita Chhachhi writes:

Women become the symbols and repositories of communal/group/national identity and fundamentalism 'constructs notions of femininity and masculinity as symbolic of the community'. (Amrita Chhachhi: 1989, pp 162,163)

To make a mass movement, it is important for women to be visible. But women are generally apathetic and would not be mobilized for gender and for political issues. Similarly, during the Amarnath agitation, mass mobilization demanded visibility of women, and there is general apathy among women for politics in Jammu. Though there are women wings of all political parties in the region, the women voter percentage as also the number of women candidates who contest elections is considerably low. The women who win the elections are further significantly few. Moreover, there are a lot of gender issues in the area, which could evoke women's intervention but it does not happen. Hence, during the Amarnath agitation, religion became a convenient tool for political mobilization on a mass scale in the region. Women were mobilized in Jammu through religion. The land transference from SASB was projected as an encroachment of spiritual sphere that belongs to women and hence, the protest by women got necessitated.

A very important question that arises while analyzing the women's participation in the Amarnath agitation is whether their participation can be categorized as a political one since there was a symbolic use of women in it. To qualify women's participation in the Amarnath agitation as political, a mandate is needed for redrawing

of the boundary between the private and the public "because of women's particular experience of the interconnection between the two supposedly separate spheres", as well as because of the "ways in which the 'public' sphere of politics influences the private lives of women, and also the ways in which power relations in the so-called private sphere create situations of oppression and domination". (Jane Freedman: 2002, p 29) For example, the audacity of women of the region became visible in the way they ran their households, which lies in their private sphere, in the face of such a prolonged *bandh* (shut down) in the Amarnath agitation that was taking place in the public sphere. Conceiving politics as an activity which is taking place at the grassroots level, instead of perceiving it as a process of occupying positions and institutions at the top level, women would give a different meaning to politics. Instead of being a formal and institutional activity, where they find their entry difficult and the whole process to be alienated from their day-to-day life, participation in the agitation, like the Amarnath agitation, would be more comfortable and more satisfying a process. To that extent their role could be defined as political.

Granting extension to the limits of the 'political', or simply stated, extension of the private into the public, made women's participation in the Amarnath agitation eligible to be categorized as a political movement. Actually, what happened during the agitation was that the private domain was carried in the public space. The private rituals of worship and religion were done in public gaze and the personal concern of children's future was given the popular voice. Thus, women entered the public space via the private domain. At this point, the question of women's agency in the Amarnath agitation surfaces. Ahearn (2001:112) defines agency as "the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act". It is with reference to this concept of 'agency' which ascribes the capability to handle social experiences to concoct methods of coping with life to the individual actor, even under the most extreme forms of life that the agency of women in the Amarnath agitation needs to be studied. The importance of 'human agency' lies at the heart of a

paradigm that recognized the role of social actors (Caroline ON Moser and Fiona C Clark, 2005). The tremendous presence of women in all the protests and processions during the Amarnath agitation provides evidence to the presence of women's agency in the event.

But women's agency (like their 'empowerment') can neither be viewed as an abstraction, nor celebrated as an unqualified good. Agency is never to be found in some pure state of volition or action, but is complexly imbricated in the contradictory structures of patriarchy. (Rajeswari Sunder Rajan: 1998, pp WS34-WS38)

So, women's participation in the Amarnath agitation cannot be uncritically qualified as their agency. The patriarchal sanction was readily available for their participation, as has already been mentioned that the mass support was indispensable in the situation. Moreover, the crucial and vital support was being provided by women in the most desirable forms, that is, they never stepped out of their prescribed roles and responsibilities. In fact, as stated before, they only carried their private domain into the public and that served the purpose.

Women's participation in the Amarnath agitation had some more peculiarities. Most of the times, there was clear cut sex segregation during the formation of protest groups. The normative behaviour for women was hardly challenged in the whole agitation. Women moved with fellow women and there was a consistent presence of male supervision and gaze over them. Though there were situations when the confrontation with the authorities or the police took place, but according to Paola Bacchetta, in such situations, "the patriarchal divide between public and private is negotiated by claiming the public space as Hindu nationalist spaces" (Paola Bacchetta: 2004). The public space helps women to build their self-confidence and a sense of empowerment by engaging themselves in setting 'standards' for public behaviour without challenging the role of men as 'protectors' (Swati Dyahadroy: 2009, p 65). Such a model is attractive because it endorses

and elaborates but does not challenge the assumptions about worthy behaviour and the concept of noble womanhood (Jeffery 2001).

Even if women's participation in the Amarnath agitation be pronounced political, the women, who fought for the political dignity of the region, neither claimed nor got the independent political space for themselves in the region. The women of Hindu-dominated areas of the Jammu region came in an overwhelming number in the Amarnath agitation, but very few women acquired leadership positions in it. Those few who did come in front were either elected representatives of the local government or the women related to the male leaders of different political parties in the region. There was no involvement of any women organization of the region in the agitation, nor did any woman leader emerge in it. On the contrary, many male leaders with no political background came into limelight in the agitation. In fact, the SAYSS, which spearheaded the agitation, had no woman member in its executive committee, nor did it include any woman in its committee for negotiating with the government. Interestingly, even none of the government's representatives was a woman.

The autonomy of women in mobilization and participation in the Amarnath agitation was a big question. The women who participated in it were there because of family reasons. Generally, only those women came on the streets whose male members were already involved and were participating in the agitation.

The women of Jammu region could not gain a fraction of political mileage from the whole episode of the Amarnath agitation. Despite of the huge presence, the emergence of woman leadership, either in the movement or in its aftermath, was nowhere to be seen. Women's mobilization for Amarnath was not translated into mobilization for gender issues as no reference to gender issues within and outside, before and after the movement, took place. Women's visibility could not get translated into women's political strength. Large number of women symbolizing the movement was not reflected in their political importance for political parties. No political party tried to woo the

women in the Assembly or Parliamentary election that immediately followed the agitation. Women's issues did not feature in political speeches of leaders of any political parties. For that matter, women's mobilization did not result in greater number of woman winners in the elections, or woman contestants, or even woman voters in the region. In the state, assembly elections that took place barely a month after the agitation, total 67 women candidates tried their luck in seven phases of polling. A closer look at the assembly elections reveal that three districts went to polls in the seventh and final phase of elections. Among them, the two districts of Jammu and Samba witnessed the maximum resistance during the Amarnath agitation, and the third was Srinagar; and it is very interesting to note that the maximum number of women candidates, that is, 31 were in the fray in this phase only. At the same time, it is disheartening to find out that not a single woman from the region, from any party, could win the elections. All the three women who won in the assembly elections in the state hailed from Kashmir region. The BJP and Congress had fielded two women candidates each in Jammu region but all four lost.

South Asia and India have had the history of woman leaders who are either widows or anyway related to male leaders. Widowhood is glorified in this part of subcontinent. In this scenario, putting aside claims of a number of woman leaders belonging to party cadres, even Shilpi Verma—widow of Kuldeep Raj Verma, who died in the agitation—contested elections from Bishnah constituency on the ticket of BJP party, but she lost in the elections.<sup>4</sup> The defeat of Shilpi Verma came as a big surprise for everybody, especially in the face of elections held in the immediate aftermath of the Amarnath agitation. It signifies the importance that is accorded to political issues and democratic process in the region, as compared to the sympathy for a woman who had lost her husband for a popular cause, which Shilpi Verma symbolized in the elections. In reality, Shilpi Verma was nowhere close to the image of an emancipated, empowered, political woman having an agency of her own. Instead, she symbolized a helpless, dependent

widow, whom one should vote because she needed to be sympathized with as a widow. So, gender did not even become the reason for Shilpi Verma's defeat in the elections. Had Shilpi Verma raised some political questions or presented a political agenda, she would have won the seat. Essentially, she was used as a symbol of housewives, loyal to their husbands even after their death, to woo women voters.<sup>5</sup>

Ironically, the gender identity neither became a reason for mobilization in the agitation nor a result of it. The agitation, which was directed against the government to highlight all sorts of discriminations in the state, could have been used to bring to focus any issue where attention would be on gender contradictions. Some women-related questions could have been raised like the government's apathy towards the appointment of the chairperson of the State Commission for Women; implementation of the Domestic Violence Act in the state; tracing a child's state subject to his or her father rather than any of the parents; government's failure to contain decreasing sex ratio and its failure to introduce women-friendly schemes and policies. But, there was a dire need on the part of the leadership in the Amarnath agitation to project a single face of opposition with a complete homogeneity, as "identity is claimed, group solidarity played out and the identity principle maintained where power is at stake and in the function of power". (Rada Ivekovic and Julie Mostov: 2004, p 12) The collective identity, stressing the common features or shared attributes, was very important to be put forward in the agitation so that the members of the society could have a feeling of belonging to the agitation. "Qualities emerging from physiological traits, psychological predispositions, regional features, or the properties of structural locations". (Karen A Cerulo: 1997, pp 385-409)

The experience of regional discrimination subsumed the sense of gender among the women in the Amarnath agitation. At the same time, there was no scope of letting gender to emerge as a distinct identity in the agitation, and so there was no gender content of the agitation. Woman was perceived and constructed as a religious being

during the agitation. She was presented as a housewife rather than an independent woman. Even the women who participated in the agitation did not show enthusiasm in raising any gender issue as that would have been perceived as a threat to the feeling of oneness of the region in the agitation.

"Identities are complex, and their deconstruction can make their heterogeneity highly visible, highlighting shared worlds of experience across difference" (Aleksandra Alund: 2005, p 154). It holds true for the women who carry identities, which are much more than their gender identity. Women came out so openly for the Amarnath issue, but not for their own gender issue, "for women cannot claim identity within the nation, or when they do so, they risk disloyalty to the higher gender national principle which prescribes roles and hierarchies" (Rada Ivekovic and Julie Mostov: 2004, p 12). So there was no space for women to raise gender-oriented issues in the Amarnath agitation.

Collectively experienced social injuries (related to segregation, discrimination and political marginalization) affect the creation of shared values in such a way that, instead of 'personal' representing the 'political', the 'political' (or communal) position becomes personalized. Dynamic communication linking individual experience with an intimate social circle generates a critical collective as well as personal awareness (Aleksandra Alund: 2005, p 151).

Paradoxically, that did not happen or happened partially in the Amarnath agitation. The political position of regional deprivation was well-emulated by women and a collective front was indeed presented in the agitation, but personal consciousness remained absent among them. The participation of women in the agitation did not help them articulate their gender issues. After the conclusion of the agitation, all the women reverted to their original front, that is, the home and the saddest part of the episode is that the women could not own the fair amount of appreciation and acknowledgement from either region

or society, for the success of the agitation as did the SAYSS. Hence the Amarnath agitation can be marked as another point of non-recognition of women's identity in the region and its appropriation into a collective identity.

## Dalits in Jammu and Kashmir

PS Verma

Dalits in Jammu and Kashmir need to be understood in the socio-economic and political context in which they are situated. Numerically, they constitute only a small fraction, that is, 7.65 per cent of the total population of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Since the Kashmir Valley is preponderantly Muslim and the Ladakh region is inhabited by the Buddhists of Leh and the Shi'a Muslims of Kargil, the Dalits form only a negligible number in these two regions. The other factors like a small proportion of cropped area and the absence of labour-intensive agriculture have also contributed to a meagre presence of Dalits in these areas.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, the Dalits make a considerable presence in the Jammu region, especially in the Hindu-dominated districts of Jammu, including Samba, Kathua, Reasi, Ramban and Udhampur. The Muslim-dominated districts of this region also have only a small presence of Dalits. Apart from the preponderant Muslim population, the mountainous terrain without 'sizeable avenues of employment' has also failed to attract the Dalit population in these districts. The present paper, however, seeks to analyse the socio-economic profile of

Dalits in the state, the nature of organizations which have mobilized and consolidated Dalit identity, characteristics of leadership, and the identification of Dalits in the sphere of politics.

## I

**Rural-Urban background of Dalits in J&K**

Category	J&K State	Jammu Region	Kashmir Valley	Ladakh Region
Rural	636,016 (82.58%)	635,178 (82.84%)	561 (21.34%)	277 (36.59%)
Urban	134,139 (17.42%)	131,591 (17.16%)	2,068 (78.66%)	480 (63.41%)
Total	770,155 (100%)	766,769 (100%)	2,629 (100%)	757 (100%)

Table I

According to 2001 census, the population of Scheduled Castes in the state of Jammu and Kashmir was only 770,155. Of them, 766,769 (99.56 per cent) belonged to the Jammu region, 2,629 (0.34 per cent) to Kashmir Valley and only 757 (0.10 per cent) to the Ladakh plateau. Further, while analysing their ratio in the population of each region, it was found that the Dalits constituted 17.44 per cent of the total population of the Jammu region and only 0.05 and 0.32 per cent of the Kashmir and Ladakh region, respectively. However, their proportion in the total population of the Hindu-dominated districts (i.e. Jammu, Samba, Kathua, and Udhampur) was as high as 23.27 per cent, whereas in the Muslim-dominated districts of the Jammu region (i.e., Poonch, Rajouri, Kishtwar and Doda) it was only 6.65 per cent. The Dalits in the state are thus concentrated in the Hindu belt and constitute about 25 per cent of the Hindu community. In terms of rural-urban background, an overwhelming majority of Dalits in Jammu and Kashmir belong to rural areas. For example, according

to the 2001 census, 82.58 per cent of the total population of Dalits in the state represented the rural areas, whereas only 17.42 per cent of the Dalits belonged to urban areas. However, in case of the Kashmir and Ladakh regions, a large number of them belonged to urban areas (Table I). In fact, most of them were residing in the cities of Srinagar and Leh, and served as employees in public sector units.

Regarding literacy, 50.06 per cent of the Dalits aged seven years and above, according to the 2001 Census, were literate in the state. Sex-wise, as much as 58.94 per cent of the males and 40.29 per cent of the Dalit females were literate. While compared to the previous census, held in the state in 1981, the literacy rate among the Dalits in the state in 1981 was only 22.44 per cent. Further, in terms of male-female literacy, only 32.34 per cent of the males and 11.70 per cent of the Dalit females in 1981 were literate. This shows that the literacy rate among Dalits in 20 years increased from 22.44 per cent in 1981 to 50.06 per cent in 2001. Earlier in 1971, the literacy rate among Dalits in the state was as low as 12 per cent. The situation now stands considerably altered. In fact, the present literacy rate among Dalits has come closer to the state's average literacy rate of 54.46 per cent. Incidentally, the general literacy rate for males in the state in 2001 was 65.75 per cent and for females 41.82 per cent.

Strikingly enough, the average literacy of Dalits in 2001 tended to be higher than the general literacy rate in several districts of the state. For example, in 2001, the average literacy rate in districts like Badgam, Kupwara, Anantnag, Baramulla, Doda, and Pulwama was only 39.54, 40.80, 44.10, 44.57, 46.92 and 47.35 per cent, respectively.<sup>2</sup> These districts are yet to achieve the 50 per cent mark of literacy. Mention may be made here that out of the earlier total 14 districts of the state, only 8 namely, Jammu (77.30%), Kathua (65.29%), Leh (62.24%), Srinagar (59.31%), Kargil (58.21%), Rajauri (57.65%), Udhampur (54.16%), and Poonch (51.07%) had crossed the 50 per cent mark. The bulk of Dalits in the state belong to the Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts which command relatively higher degree of literacy.

Incidentally, Jammu has the highest literacy rate in the state. However, the state's literacy rate (54.46%) was far below the average literacy rate of 65.38 per cent in the country. In fact, most states, barring few like Bihar and Jharkhand, have higher literacy rate than Jammu and Kashmir. However, within the state, the region-wise average literacy, according to 2001 Census, was 58.73 per cent in Jammu region and only 49.51 per cent in the Kashmir valley.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the location of the Dalits in the higher literacy belt of the state, the benefits of reservation in services and related opportunities have also inspired them to attain literacy. The literacy rate of Dalits increased by more than four times from 12 per cent in 1971 to 50.06 per cent in 2001.

However, the number of Dalit youths in villages with higher educational qualifications tended to be very small. One would find an appreciable number of school educated or matriculates among the Dalit youths but not many graduates and post-graduates in the rural areas. During discussions with Dalit youths in certain Dalit-dominated villages, it was observed that many of them dropped out at secondary and college level. Generally, the problem of dropouts in case of Dalits has been witnessed at all stages of education. An empirical study on education and social mobility among Dalits in the Jammu region shows that the problem existed at the school as well as the college levels. Moreover, it is relatively more among the females. According to the study:

While the dropout rate among the concerned children at the primary stage was 25.04 per cent, it was 39.92 per cent at the secondary stage. At the higher stage, it was 35.02 per cent. It was also found that the dropout rate was higher among females than males at all stages of education. Accordingly, the female dropouts composed 67.66 per cent of the total dropouts at the primary stage, 70.75 per cent at the secondary stage and 53.76 per cent at the higher stage.<sup>4</sup>

In most cases, the economic factor was the major cause for dropout. An appreciable number of Dalits in Jammu and Kashmir, unlike many other states, own agricultural land but the holdings in

most cases are too small to meet the needs of households. Therefore, most family members, including the younger ones, contribute to the family income. However, certain categories of Dalits, like the service class families and those settled in urban areas, have become more conscious about the education of their children. Similarly, certain sections of Dalits like the Chamars have also paid relatively more attention to education.

Occupationally, Dalits in Jammu and Kashmir encompass a wide variety of occupational categories like cultivators, agricultural labourers, employees, and those who earn their livelihood through household industry (manufacturing, processing, servicing, repairs, etc) and miscellaneous types of marginal activities. The previous census figures (1981) showed that out of the total Dalit population (497,363) in the state, there were 223,906 (45.02%) total workers and 273,457 (54.98%) non-workers. Further, the category of total workers consisted of 140,323 (62.67%) main workers and 83,583 (37.33%) marginal workers. The 2001 Census also revealed similar trends, as out of the total Dalit population (770,155) in the state, there were 282,587 (36.69%) total workers and 487,568 (63.31%) non-workers. Further, the total workers included 193,153 (68.35%) main workers and 89,434 (31.65%) marginal workers. Those in the category of marginal workers get less than 185 working days in a year.

Interestingly, among the Dalit main workers, cultivators were the major occupational group. According to the 1981 Census, the proportion of cultivators in the total main workers was as high as 62.79 per cent. However, in the case of the 2001 Census, the proportion of cultivators among the total main workers declined to 44.11 per cent. This decline of 18.68 per cent of the cultivators from 1981 to 2001 may be partly attributed to the factors of division and disposal of lands by some Dalit families. Another interesting aspect is that the proportion of 'other workers' among the main workers increased from 25.15 per cent in 1981 to 48.81 per cent in 2001. However, an appreciable number of the Dalit 'main workers' in the state still enjoy the privilege of falling in the category of cultivators. If

compared with the neighbouring state of Punjab, it would be found that only 4.11 per cent of the total Dalit 'main workers' in Punjab were cultivators.

**Different Occupational Categories out of the 'Total Main Workers' (Dalits) in J&K**

Years	Total Main Workers	Cultivators	Agriculture Labourers	Household Industries	Other Workers
1981	140,323	88,109 (62.79%)	14,097 (10.05%)	2,826 (2.01%)	35,291 (25.15%)
2001	193,153	85,196 (44.11%)	10,573 (5.47%)	3,109 (1.61%)	94,275 (48.81%)

Table II

The relatively greater proportion of cultivators in Jammu and Kashmir could be attributed to the radical land reforms initiated and undertaken by the regime headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. His government transferred land to the tillers and enacted 'Big Landed Estate Abolition Act, 1950'. These reforms were radical to an extent that no compensation was paid 'in respect of the land from which expropriation had taken place' under the Act. Lakhs of tillers and marginal groups, including Dalits, were permitted to 'occupy and appropriate the shares of land due to them'.<sup>5</sup> After assuming as Prime Minister of the interim government in the state on 5 March 1948, Sheikh Abdullah abolished 396 *Jagirs* and *Muafis* and 2,347 cash grants on 1 April 1948. Again on 13 July 1950, 'nearly 10,000 landlords were expropriated from holdings in excess of 182 *Kanals* without payment of compensation'.<sup>6</sup> According to reports, the total land transferred to the tillers, as a result of these land reforms, was 92,927 acres during 1951-52, 66,755 acres during 1952-53 and 36,619 acres during 1953-54. The number of tillers who got land was 162,867.<sup>7</sup>

The process continued, and subsequently on 31 October 1972, the State Assembly passed Agrarian Reform Bill, which abolished all intermediaries in land besides imposing ceiling at 12½ standard acres. Further, the Agrarian Reform Bills in 1976 and 1978 also undertook the task of implementing ceiling and attending to matters like land to landless, abolition of absentee landlordism, etc. In the past, the weaker sections (i.e., agricultural labourers, insecure tenants, etc) and tenant cultivators had been 'at the verge of starvation' due to ruthless exploitation of the autocratic feudal regimes. In addition, the Dalits had also suffered the menace of untouchability. In fact, there existed a worst form of untouchability in the landlord-dominated countryside of the state. But now the situation has completely changed. An appreciable number of those who were earlier untouchables now own agricultural land and cultivate it themselves. This has also brought about a significant change in the psyche of the Dalits who had groaned under the feudal system and the most erroneous hierarchical order since ages. In Samba, a veteran Dalit leader of 79 years told that those were the days of the *Begar* (forced labour) and social discrimination. He also told that he had often faced obstacles in the way while going to school in the old days.

However, barring exceptions, most of the land-owning Dalits in the state have only a small quantity of cultivable land, which can hardly meet the requirements of their families. But when a member of such families entered into white collar jobs, the situation witnessed considerable changes. In some cases, such families subsequently also entered into business, transport, politics etc.

Interestingly, among the Dalit 'main workers', only a small number was engaged in the work of agricultural labourers in the state. It may be partly attributed to the fact that owing to the preponderance of small holdings in the state, the farm sector hardly generated enough opportunities for the weaker sections to earn their livelihood. However, their proportion in the category of 'other workers' became almost double between 1981 and 2001 (Table II).



This category includes factory workers, plantation workers, those in trade, commerce, business, transport, mining, construction, government servants, municipal employees, teachers, etc. The facts reveal that among the total Dalit 'main workers', the share of 'other workers' is increasing, whereas in the other categories, including cultivators, it has declined (Table II). If cultivators enjoyed the bigger share in the 'total main workers' in 1981, the category of 'other workers' became the largest in 2001. The number of Scheduled Castes in services (civil, police, teaching, municipal, etc.) has also increased with the eight per cent reservation in state services from 1970 onwards. The Scheduled Caste leaders have had to campaign for the implementation of the reservation policy in the state for a long time. The President of the 'All India Depressed Classes League, J&K', Bhagat Amar Nath, who sat on fast unto death for the purpose, died in Jammu on the eleventh day of the fast on 1 June 1970. Since then, 1st June every year is organized as martyrs' death anniversary in Jammu by the Scheduled Castes.

On the whole, there has been considerable improvement in the condition of Dalits in the state. In fact, a sizeable group of elitist class consisting of bureaucrats, military-police officials, professionals and politicians has emerged over the years. But still, it is mainly the people of various Dalit castes that form the bottom layer of economy in the state. Over one-third of their population toils as marginal workers, facing the uphill task to move forward and overcome the economic hardships. If some have adopted new occupations like tailoring, carpentry, masonry, hair cutting, etc., lots of others either toil as casual labourers on farms, roads, forest, river beds, brick kilns, construction work etc., or work as vegetable vendors, domestic help, basket makers and the like. The state authorities have hardly proved capable of mitigating the plight of such people. Conversely, even the funds provided to the 'J&K Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes Development Corporation' reported to have been either remained unutilized or diverted to other projects. "Against

the target of covering 2,745 persons belonging to these categories, the corporation extended the benefits to only 482 persons, resulting in a shortfall of 82 per cent during 2004–2005. The shortfall was to the extent of 83 per cent during 2002–2003, when against the target of 3,817, the benefits of various schemes were provided to only 655 persons".<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the "National Safai Karamchari Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) sanctioned a grant of Rs 5.97 crore to the state corporation between 1999 to 2004 to find income generating units for scavengers and *Safai Karamcharis*, but the latter failed to forward even a single proposal."<sup>9</sup>

In terms of caste, Dalits in the state are far from being a single harmonious category. There are as many as 13 separate castes clubbed together as Scheduled Castes in the state. These castes include Barwala, Basit, Batwal, Chamar or Ramdasia, Chura, Dhyar, Doom or Mahasha, Gardi, Jolaha, Megh, Ratal, Saryara and Watal. Of them, the three Dalit castes, namely, Megh, Chamar and Mahasha are numerically and political dominant. The rest of the castes, being less in number, could be termed as marginal groups. Among the three major castes, the Chamars have been traditionally identified with leather work. Besides this, they were often employed as plough men and field labourers by the landed classes in the state. Those Chamars who had embraced the Sikh religion came to be known as 'Ramdasia' after Guru Ram Das. Like Chamars, the Meghs (called as Bhagats) also worked in the field in addition to their traditional occupation as weavers. By virtue of being weavers, they considered themselves as superior than the other Dalits. General Cunningham "described them as an inferior caste of cultivators who inhabited the banks of the upper Saduj at the time of Alexander's invasion, and probably gave their name to the town of Makhawal".<sup>10</sup> According to Ibbetson, they were almost confined to the upper valleys of the Ravi and Chenab, and their stronghold was the sub-montane portion of Sialkot lying between these two rivers.<sup>11</sup> Like the Chamars and Meghs, the Mahashas are also Hindus and are concentrated as a preponderant Dalit caste in the Kathua district.

Traditionally, they used to make baskets and other articles of bamboo, grass, etc.

Numerically, among the three major Dalit castes, the Meghs are estimated to be relatively greater in number, followed by Mahashas and Chamars. Further, in terms of area-wise concentration, of the five districts in which the different Dalit castes have their presence, the Meghs formed the largest group in Doda, Mahashas in Kathua and Chamars in Jammu. In the districts of Udhampur and Rajouri too, these castes have a sizeable presence. Mention may also be made here, that most of the Dalit representatives in the state have also been from these three major caste groups. On account of their repeated success in elections, some of the representatives and their families have emerged as centres of power. In fact, some Dalit leaders have not only won more than once, but also facilitated the entry of their near-relations in the State Legislature. For example, the 52 members elected to the State Assembly from the reserved seats between 1957 and 2002 were actually 35 members. Out of these 35 MLAs, 25 were elected to the State Assembly only once, 6 twice, 2 thrice, one each for four and five times. Moreover, among their siblings, son of one MLA and daughter-in-law of another one also entered the State Legislative Assembly. Some MLAs were also elected to the State Legislative Council. This apart, many of them have been associated with the socio-cultural and political associations of Dalits in the state. In addition, some were members of the Panchayati Raj institutions or municipal bodies, and some had either retired or resigned from government service and contested the assembly elections. However, with regard to their caste affiliations, out of the total 35 MLAs elected from the reserved seats, 12 were Meghs, 10 Chamars, 8 Mahashas, 3 others (Batwal, Barwala, etc) and the caste of two could not be known. Further, if one Dalit MLA, who was elected from an open seat in 1996, is included, then the number of Mahasha MLAs becomes nine. This makes it evident that the reserved seats have been represented overwhelmingly by the three major castes of Dalits in the state. Moreover, several of them also belonged to well-to-do families.

## II

In terms of status, like the upper and middle castes, almost every Dalit caste in villages also maintains a sort of socio-ritualistic distance from other castes, particularly regarding matrimonial alliances. The factor of caste endogamy is considered important among the Dalit castes also. Moreover, the caste-wise exclusive residential localities of Dalits are a common feature in most villages. Similarly, every major caste has its own socio-religious organizations. For example, the Meghs have the temples of Bhagat Kabir, Mahashas of Goswami Guru Nabha Das and Chamars of Guru Ravi Das. Every year, the Dalit activists in villages and towns make special arrangements for the *Jayanti* celebrations of their spiritual masters. These celebrations are marked by processions, fairs, etc., and the devotees are served *langar* by the organizers. Such occasions have provided impetus to the growing consciousness and consolidation of the respective identities. The various other social organizations like Guru Ravi Das Sabha, Megh Mandal, Mahasha Sadar Sabha, etc., have been also formed to promote and strengthen the cause of their respective caste identity. The competing elites of various Dalit castes have also mobilized these social organizations for strengthening their chances during the state and local elections.

Apart from the caste-wise organizations, various Dalit organizations like the Harijan Mandai, All India Depressed Classes League (Jammu and Kashmir), Jammu and Kashmir Harijan Sevak Sangh, Scheduled Castes Welfare Association (Jammu), All India Confederation of SC/ST Organizations J&K, All J&K SC/ST Lawyers Forum, etc., have also articulated and mobilized Dalits from time to time. In fact, the Harijan Mandai and the Depressed Classes League played a crucial role in advancing the cause of Dalits. Their leaders mobilized the Dalit masses and fought for equality, recognition and dignity. Besides, they launched campaign for proper representation in services, representative bodies and educational institutions.

The implementation of reservation has been the major issue for Dalit leaders and activists. As mentioned above, Bhagat Amar Nath

(of Depressed League J&K) sacrificed his life for the purpose in June 1970. The Harijan Mandai, among others, also contested the assembly elections in 1957 and 1962. In 1957, it had also won the Jammu Tehsil reserved assembly seat with a considerable margin. Moreover, in the Samba reserved seat, according to the candidate, the Harijan Mandai was polled more votes, yet the ruling party's nominee was declared elected. However, by the 1967 assembly polls, the Harijan Mandai disappeared from the electoral contests and some of its leaders entered the fray as the ruling party candidates. New organizations like the 'All India Confederation of SC/ST Organizations, J&K' (AICSCSTO) have concentrated only on the issue of reservation. It was mainly because of the efforts of various Dalit organizations and related groups, that the authorities had to enact the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004 (Act No XIV of 2004). Prior to the enactment of this Act, the benefits of reservation were being given by way of executive orders issued by the state government. Incidentally, the Scheduled Castes were granted benefits of proper preservation as late as in 1970 and the Scheduled Tribes only in 1989. "There was no provision of Scheduled Tribe in the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir state."<sup>12</sup>

It was only in 1989, that the provisions relating to Scheduled Tribes were extended to the state. However, the Reservation Act 2004 provided benefits of reservation in recruitments, promotions and admissions in professional institutions for SCs/STs, and socially backward classes.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, the Reservation Rules, which came into force vide SRO-294 of 21 October 2005, antagonized the Dalit activists in the state. In fact, the leaders of the AICSCSTO termed the SRO-294 as anti-SC/ST decrees. According to them, it was harmful because it cut down reservation in promotion for SCs from 8 per cent to 4 per cent; failed to enhance promotion for STs from 5 per cent to 10 per cent; did not retain the consequential seniority by virtue of promotion under the rule of reservation; shifted the roster point from 3 to 6 in case of SCs and from 5 to 12 in case of STs; and

abolished the backlog vacancies accrued to the SC/ST candidates.<sup>14</sup> They also denounced the state government for recommending the SC status to the Pahari-speaking people. The AICSCSTO, among others, also submitted a memorandum to the chief minister on 20 March 2006, demanding changes and modifications in the rules. The memorandum emphasized that the reservation in direct recruitment should be enhanced from 8 per cent to 10 per cent for SCs, from 10 per cent to 12 per cent for Gujjars and Bakarwals (ST) and from 2 per cent to 4 per cent each for the residents of Leh and Kargil. The same proportion was demanded in regard to promotions and admissions in professional institutions for each group.

Besides, the memorandum demanded that the contractual, ad-hoc and other posts under the government, statutory authorities and public undertakings should be brought within the purview of the reservation rules. Further, it asserted that the status of Scheduled Tribes recommended for the Pahari-speaking people should be scrapped and the benefits of reservation to SC/ST in proportion to the population be given in every division or district of the state. According to the AICSCSTO leaders, the benefits of reservation were not given in districts where their population was marginal. However, the state president of the AICSCSTO seemed to be confident about the amendments or changes sought in the reservation rules. He also felt that those institutions which have not given benefit of reservation so far, would not be able to ignore it for long. As a matter of fact, with the involvement of the Scheduled Tribes, the Dalit voice has started to be heard in the far-flung areas of the Kashmir and Ladakh regions.

The AICSCSTO has also received support of the enlightened groups of Dalits, including the professionals, bureaucrats and politicians. The one-day convention of AICSCSTO in Srinagar on 30 July 2006 was attended by prominent SC/ST leaders, activists and general people from the different regions of the state. The speakers, including some sitting legislators and former ministers, supported the agenda of the AICSCSTO and criticized the SRO-294. A former

Union Minister and sitting MLC, P Namgyal, while emphasizing that the SC/ST legislators should focus attention on the plight of these marginal sections, said that he would stress for inclusion of the experts of confederation to review the SRO-294. Likewise, former health minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mian Altaf, said, "I just want all of us to help our people whenever they need us. If it's a government employee or a businessman, whoever of your community comes to you ask you for help, you should help and then only can we have a better future."

Mention may be made here that the reaction of the AICSCSTO regarding the SRO-294 was expressed through rallies and demonstrations at the Tehsil and district headquarters. For the purpose of enlarging their base, the protesters also demanded implementation of the Mandal Commission report and reservation for the economically poor in the upper castes.

Incidentally, the lawyers belonging to SC/ST group also formed the 'All Jammu and Kashmir SC/ST Lawyers Forum' in 2003, to ensure that they were not ignored by the authorities while assigning the positions of importance in the legal profession. A senior Dalit advocate in Jammu told the author that it was because of the organized activities that a Dalit advocate for the first time was recently made the Deputy Advocate General in the state.

The SC-ST combine has made the Dalit movement a force to reckon with in the state. Interestingly, if the grassroots organizations of Dalits give an impression of being exclusive organizations of their respective caste identities, the AICSCSTO—which aims at advancing the cause of Dalits in recruitment and promotions—tends to be an inclusive formation representing all types of marginal people like Dalits and tribal people belonging to diverse traditions, i.e., Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist. The confederation includes three categories of marginal groups: (i) those who were earlier subjected to oppression, institutionalized hierarchy, bondage or forced labour, etc., (ii) Gujjars and Bakarwals who virtually combine both the pastoral and the agricultural occupations (i.e., those who have become sedentary

remain in contact with the pastoralists to employ their surplus man power)<sup>15</sup>, and (iii) the Buddhists of Leh and the Shi'a Muslims of Kargil. Though the perspective of the confederation tends to be limited to the benefits of reservation, its efforts to mobilize diverse people would prove positive in a state, where the major thrust of politics has been on ethno-regional stereotypes, such as Jammu vs Valley, Kashmiri nationalism vs Dogra land, Hindu vs Muslim, Buddhist vs Kashmiri Muslims, autonomy vs strong centre, special status vs complete merger of the state, etc.

### III

Politically, the areas which have sizeable presence of Dalit voters have had frequently supported the Congress party. It was only on rare occasions, like the elections of 1977 and 1996, that the Congress Party was trounced by the rivals like the Janata Party, BJP and BSP (Table III). Unlike other states, the Congress party in Jammu and Kashmir was founded only on 26 January 1965. Prior to this, the central Congress leadership, particularly Pandit Nehru, "regarded the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) as the Pradesh Congress Party for all practical purposes". However, the performance of the party has been spectacular in the reserved constituencies during most assembly elections. BJP has been the major rival of the Congress party in the Jammu region, including the reserved seats. However, it was only on account of the enigma of emergency in 1977 and the BJP's glowing condition in the state and elsewhere in the 1990s, that Congress lost ground in these constituencies. The BJP, thus, won three out of the seven reserved seats in 1996. But during the successive assembly polls in 2002, it failed to retain these seats.

Interestingly enough, the BSP, which claimed to be the sole spokesman of the Dalits, could win only two out of the seven reserved seats in 1996. It was a period in which the Congress party was in a critical condition. Mention may also be made here that the BSP in 1996 had an alliance with the JKNC, which swept the assembly polls

and returned to power after a gap of over six years. However, the performance of the BSP in 1996 was comparatively much better, as it won four assembly seats, including the two reserved constituencies, with the highest ever 6.43 per cent votes polled in the state. Moreover, in the Jammu region, the party scored as high as 11.19 per cent of the total votes polled in the region. Furthermore, the district-wise performance of the party during the 1996 elections showed that it had scored the highest in the Jammu district with 18.94 per cent votes followed by Doda (13.14 per cent), Kathua (11.46 per cent) and Udhampur (6.04 per cent).

#### Party-wise Performance in Reserved Assembly Constituencies in J&K

Parties	1957	1962	1967	1972	1977	1983	1987	1996	2000
Congress	-	-	6	6	1	6	5	1	4
JKNC	2	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Praja Parishad/BJP	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
Janata Party/JD	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	1	-
BSP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Harijan Mandai	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
J&K PP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total Seats	4	4	6	6	6	6	6	7	7

Table III

In the case of Kashmir Valley, the BSP contested in two districts, i.e., Srinagar and Budgaon, but failed to make its presence felt there. The score of the party in these districts was only 2.88 and 2.55 per cent votes, respectively. Subsequently, in the assembly elections in 2002,

the party's performance came down to only one seat with just 4.5 per cent of the total votes polled in the state. In the Jammu region itself, the score of the party declined from 11.19 per cent in 1996 to 6.83 per cent in 2002. Moreover, the lone seat fetched by the party in the 2002 assembly polls was not a reserved seat but an open constituency. Incidentally, the BSP for the first time entered the assembly polls in the state in 1987, but failed to muster more than 2.17 per cent of the total votes polled in the state.

#### Region-wise Performance of BSP in Assembly Polls in J&K since 1987

Regions	1987	1996	2002
Jammu	5.25	11.19	6.83
Kashmir	0.08	0.79	0.11
Ladakh	0	0	0
Total	2.17	6.43	4.5

Table IV

Apart from the assembly polls, the BSP has been in the fray for the parliamentary polls since 1989. But it was polled only 4.12 per cent of the votes polled in the state in 1989. Almost a similar trend was witnessed in the subsequent parliamentary elections (1996, 1998, 1999 and 2004), in which it failed to register any success. Its performance hardly inspired the voters to rally around the party. From this, it can be inferred that the party has failed to emerge as a viable unit of Dalit assertion in the political sphere of the state. Earlier, the Harijan Mandai also failed as large number of the Dalit voters were influenced more by the ruling National Conference and subsequently by the Congress party. To attract the Dalit voters, it becomes imperative for the BSP to have a sound organizational base up to the grassroots level, besides a competent leadership to guide the workers and activists for undertaking the responsibility of mobilizing the people. Moreover,

the party needs to evolve better strategies to mobilize the backward classes like *hanjis*, *shikarawallas*, fishermen, potters, *khakrobes*, barbers, *dhobis*, *jheewars*, *telis*, *lohars*, *tarkhans*, *mirasis*, etc. Dalits have no clash of interests with these caste groups in the state.

In brief, the Dalits in the state of Jammu and Kashmir form only a small number, but in the areas of their concentration, their proportion tends to be almost as much as one-fourth of the total population of the district. They are divided into 13 different Dalit castes and an appreciable number of them enjoy the privilege of ownership of agricultural land, though only marginal in terms of quantity in most cases. During the course of discussions, it was found that each group of Dalits had a strong sense of its separate caste identity. Yet the Dalits in the state are bereft of factionalism as witnessed in several other states; wherein the competing Dalit castes have widened intra-Dalit fragmentation and pitted one Dalit caste against another like Balmiki and associates against Chamars, Mazhabis-Balmikis against Adharmis/Chamars and Madigas against Malas. Conversely, the Dalit organizations like the AICSCSTO have not only consolidated the Dalit identity, but also made it more assertive and widespread by way of uniting the SCs and STs. However, in the political sphere, the Dalits in the state hardly have any autonomous political outfit of Dalit assertion. Bulk of Dalit population, barring exceptions, has supported the Congress party during the elections, as revealed by the political behaviour of the people of reserved constituencies from time to time. Of the three regions of the state, Dalits are concentrated in the rural areas of the Jammu region. Comparatively, they still form the bottom layer of the economy and society, but unlike many other states, the vices of untouchability and perpetration of atrocities on Dalits are infrequent in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

## Section V

### The Other Kashmir

## **Socio-Political Realities of Pakistan Administered Kashmir**

Ershad Mahmud

### **Introduction**

The political awaking and formulation of dissident voices are rooted in centuries-old history of the area presently known as Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK). Interestingly, Pakistan Administered Kashmir comprises several distinct parts of formerly Jammu and Kashmir state. Geographically, Muzaffarabad is part of Kashmir valley; Poonch has its own history, though closely linked with Jammu province, while Mirpur and Kotli had been parts of Jammu province. Besides, all these districts share borders with Pakistan's eastern province of Punjab and North West Frontier Province (NWFP). Therefore, these areas have been under the influence of multiple cultures and languages. Political movement against the British Raj with the Muslim League on the forefront also made a huge impact on the psyche of these people.

The southern part of today's PAK is closely netted with the bordering districts of Punjab, particularly, Jhelum, Gujarat and Sialkot. Interestingly, people living on both sides belong to Jat or its sub-castes. On the other hand, central part of PAK, i.e., inhabitants of former

Poonch Jagir, a semi-autonomous unit of Jammu and Kashmir, and Muzaffarabad maintain ties with the Rawalpindi district of Punjab and always prefer to develop economic and social bonds in and around Rawalpindi region due to its geographic proximity. Besides, Kashmiri refugees' migration<sup>1</sup> and a large number of locals also relocate their families to get settled in these district headquarters to have municipal education and other necessary facilities, once they got overseas jobs.

Additionally, when the Mangla Dam was built in the 1960s, more than 100,000 people were displaced. The entire Mirpur city was flooded as it formed part of the area comprising the dam's reservoir. A new city was established but it failed to solve the problems caused by the large-scale displacement. Therefore, the federal government rehabilitated displaced persons in the neighbouring districts of Mirpur, i.e., Jhelum and Gujarat. These families still maintain their ties with their relatives back home. Furthermore, they share common languages such as Hindko and Potwari which are related to Punjabi, but have distinct features.

### **Roots of Socio-Political Awakening**

The area comprising Pakistan Administered Kashmir was strongly linked with the British government instead of Srinagar or Jammu before the state got divided in 1947. The Maharaja's dynasty never got on well with the people of these areas, particularly with the people of Poonch. Therefore, a host of reasons made Punjab their natural destination: lack of communication, strained relationship with the Maharaja, and poverty-stricken households had been compelling factors to obtain employment either in the Indian armed forces or in the homes of British officers. Incidentally, the adjacent areas such as Rawalpindi and Gujjar Khan were also hub of armed forces recruitment. The World War I forced the British government to increase their combatant power, thus, it offered new job avenues within the Indian armed forces for locals. Meanwhile, in the late 1930s, a significant number of Mirpuris also got employed in the British navy

as sailors. A study says that around 60,000 men from Poonch and Mirpur served in the Indian army during World War II.<sup>2</sup> This sort of opportunity made them politically conscious about their future state of affairs, besides running their daily life. They also became familiar with the anti-Raj movement in Indian cities and closely watched their tactics against colonial power.

Meanwhile, the establishment of Muslim Conference in 1932 and state elections in 1934 played an instrumental role to shape local political awakening and aspirations. The Muslim Conference, being the first political party, acquainted the local population to the Indian Muslim League, at least ideologically. Besides, local social activists and reformers, namely, Col Khan Muhammad Khan, Raja Akbar Khan, Fateh Muhammad Karailwi and Raja Hayder Khan endeavoured to organize and reform the locals by educating them and giving them a sense of their basic rights. These stalwarts had made huge impact in their own respective areas. Muslim Conference was also organized in these areas and bagged all seats in 1947 state assembly elections. It gave a tremendous boost to the political activities and enlarged the political canvas for the common man.

### **Political Divide**

After the formation of the PAK government, the Muslim Conference became a major stakeholder and solely responsible for the 'freedom' of the remaining part of Jammu and Kashmir. The federal government also recognized the Muslim Conference as a representative body of Kashmiris. Therefore, the party chief Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas (1904-67), enjoyed unprecedented powers and backing of the federal government as he was a major ally of the Muslim League in Jammu and Kashmir and migrated from Jammu to Pakistan. He, with the help of the federal government, discouraged the new political or ideological identities in the areas. Therefore, lack of space for power politics introduced tribal and Baridari politics in PAK. The political plus personality clash between Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas and founder



president of PAK Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan (1915–2003) turned into tribal conflict in early 1950s. The federal government had to use forces to maim the uprising against undemocratic rule imposed by the then Muslim Conference leadership with the collaboration of the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs & Northern Areas (KANA). The said clash resulted in deep-seated tribal and regional divide, instead of political and ideological.<sup>3</sup>

### **New Power Centre Emerges**

Besides the old guards, i.e., Chuadhary Abbas and Sardar Ibrahim, other voices too had emerged in the local political and social life at that time. Raja Hayder Khan, the towering Rajput leader from Muzaffarabad and Chaudhary Noor Hussain of Mirpur surfaced as Jat leaders, respectively, on the edges of Pakistan Administered Kashmir. Gradually, PAK society became a blend of tribal and political variation. It is a hard reality that the entire local political discourse revolves around three tribes, i.e., Rajputs, Sudhans and Jats of Mirpur. Barring a few exceptions, all mainstream political leaders come from these tribes. The phenomenon got unprecedented relevance during mid 1980s, when the Jats started to assert themselves on the basis of wealth and kinship. The former Prime Minister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhary was heavily backed by his Jat clan, which is largely settled in the United Kingdom. Traditionally, the Southeast (Poonch) and South (Mirpur plus Kotli) regions always dominated over the PAK political landscape. Rajputs are spreading in entire areas and their influence is over, approximately, 12 constituencies out of 29. Similarly, their connections within Pakistani military and political establishment also do matter and quite often they get undue favours from them.<sup>4</sup>

### **Diaspora Factors Emerge**

The later half of 1970s witnessed sudden economic and social changes in PAK owing to remittances of overseas workers in the Persian Gulf and the United Kingdom. In fact, the material success

created consciousness of identity and high social stature back home. Driven by these motives, the Mirpuri diaspora also emphasized on their local identity within the realm of PAK. PAK's diaspora, particularly settled in the United Kingdom, have been taking deep interest in politics for a long time, especially from mid-1990s. Mirpuris started heavily influencing the local politics in many ways. Initially, they funded many groups in elections, but subsequently, they began to get directly involved, thanks to dual nationality. Now all major political parties and candidates get monetary support from these diaspora groups. To make it further lucrative, a new reserved seat in the assembly was created for overseas Kashmiris by the Sikander Hayyat government (1985–1990). This move also stirred up lot of political enthusiasm among diverse groups settled around the world, particularly in Britain. Of late, a few family-run business houses based in the Gulf States also started backing their family members to contest elections and earn fame and political position to further promote their own interests. In last two state elections, huge financial investments were made by these families which pitched strong candidates in the field.

Immigrant workers played an instrumental role in the development of PAK. The remittances that they send back home have now become a critical component of the local economy. The migration history of Jammu and Kashmir state and particularly from the areas now known as Pakistan Administered Kashmir is ages old. The land was not fertile and agriculture was heavily dependent on seasonal rains. During the tyrannical monarchical rule (1846–1947), the local administration was unsympathetic towards Muslims, especially towards people of these border areas. Avenues of employment were very limited and whenever opportunities arose, the loyalists always got priority. In these circumstances, a large number of people used to emigrate to seek jobs. People of these areas used to find jobs in British India, mainly in the armed forces or in the homes of the ruling elite.

A significant number of people, particularly inhabitants of Mirpur and its surrounding areas, found jobs in the UK. The Mirpuri

settlers' history began in 1930s when they started to work as stokers on merchant ships operating out of Bombay. The British heavy industries faced acute shortage of labour during World War II (1939–1944). Mirpuri seamen were the natural beneficiaries, and without wasting anytime, they found work in munitions factories in Yorkshire and the West Midlands. After the war, some went home, but significant number of workers stayed on to take advantage of the opportunities that became available in the post-war industrial boom. The migration from PAK to Britain took place in different times; it sharply increased particularly in 1960s. When Jammu and Kashmir state was divided by the cease-fire line in January 1949, it brought new avenues and opportunities for the local population. They took advantage of the situation as they were traditionally dynamic and accommodative. Since, India and Pakistan had a conflict over the water resources soon after Partition the World Bank mediated and settled the dispute by dividing the usage of the river on an equal basis. Consequently, Pakistan started the construction of the Mangla Dam on the river Jhelum to fulfill its energy needs. The construction caused a displacement of a large population of Mirpur, including the old city of Mirpur. Subsequently, they too emigrated with their families to the UK. At present, over 500,000 Kashmiris from the region are living in the UK. Beside the United Kingdom, a sizeable number of PAK people have found jobs in the Middle East, United States and Canada.<sup>5</sup>

The migration to the UK and employment in the Middle Eastern states brought various social and economic problems back home. It created a class of families who solely depend on remittances, instead of finding jobs locally. In 1992, one-third of rural households had at least one male member working outside. It has reduced productivity and has greatly affected the traditional lifestyle of the Kashmiri people through an increase in non-agricultural employment outside PAK.

Besides remittance-based development, various other factors also help PAK to grow fast. Unlike four provinces of Pakistan, here the land is more equitably distributed to small holders, and education

levels are relatively high—with literacy at 61 per cent, compared with 45 per cent in Pakistan.<sup>6</sup>

The neo-rich class made huge impact on the local polity, and when their success stories reach back home, it inspires a new wave of immigration. It is commonly said that often an enterprising youngster leaves home to have a better future in Europe or Middle East and the rest of family waits for remittances to enjoy life at his expense.

### **Political Landscape of PAK**

Around a dozen parties are registered with the state elections commission. However, most of the current active lot of political workers and leaders are the by-product of the freedom struggle of 1947–48 or hails from their second generation. The two major events shaped today's PAK politics, i.e., the presidential elections of 1970, on the adult franchise basis, opened up new avenues for the first time for rival political groups in the area. Subsequently, the formation of constitution and introduction of parliamentary system also multiplied opportunities to new aspirants to try their luck in power politics. Realizing it, Pakistan People's Party was established in early 1970s by local mid-career politicians, though it remained a non-entity until Sardar Ibrahim Khan joined it in 1974 and got full patronage of the Bhutto regime.<sup>7</sup> Besides, intense power struggle within various stakeholders also played a significant role to create general awareness at large and political acumen among the leaders and workers of different parties coupled with fast increasing literacy rate and economic prosperity. Second, the uninterrupted election process since 1985, and the smooth running of state governments in Muzaffarabad also ensured continuity of the system. Meanwhile, it led to the creation of two-party system in PAK, i.e., the Muslim Conference and the People's Party.

Currently, PAK political divide revolves around three sets of political opinions. The Muslim Conference, Pakistan People's Party and the newly founded People's Muslim League are regarded as

the mainstream parties. Conversely, the religious-politico parties represent different religious schools of thought, while a set of nationalist parties lead a smaller but hyperactive chunk of society. Interestingly, the mainstream parties have always been enjoying political backing of their allies in Pakistani political and military establishment. While religious and nationalist groups, periodically, got Islamabad's backing but limited to the Kashmir issue. In the following part of this paper, the entire political, religious and nationalist spectrum, with reference to their ideology, political role and leadership will be examined.

## **Ruling Parties of PAK**

### **Muslim Conference (MC)**

It is known as a pioneer political outfit of the people of the formerly united Jammu and Kashmir state. The 1947–48 uprising against the Maharaja's autocratic rule was organized and fought under the flag of MC and subsequently, it formed the PAK government and ruled it for over two decades without seeking the people's mandate. The party is regarded an establishment party in the area for a long time. However, it has had to witness several internal splits and personality feuds among its stalwarts, particularly between Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas and Sardar Ibrahim Khan during the 1950s. It resulted in two groups of the Muslim Conference led by Abbas and Ibrahim respectively from late 1960s, and remained until Sardar Ibrahim merged its faction into the Pakistan People's Party in 1975.

The Muslim Conference fought and won the presidential elections in 1970 under the leadership of Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, first-ever election on the basis of adult franchise. The said elections were regarded completely free and fair in PAK history. Sardar Qayyum Khan became the president. He introduced multi-faceted reforms, including formulation of the 1974 constitution. Amazingly, by confronting the Bhutto-led federal government, he emerged as one

of the towering leaders of the anti-Bhutto government not only in PAK but also in Pakistan.

The party historically supports the idea of accession to Pakistan. However, over the last few years, it has shown tremendous flexibility towards the future dispensation of Jammu and Kashmir. The Muslim Conference regards Kashmir issue as a disputed one but its activities have been limited to the political and rhetorical support to the Kashmiri people across the LoC. It has quite a strong basis in local politics and always maintains close links with the political and military establishment of Pakistan. The MC leadership supported former President General Pervez Musharraf's 'four-point formula' on Kashmir. It has also been wholeheartedly supporting broader India-Pakistan rapprochement and peaceful resolution of Kashmir. Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan hosted a reception in honour of visiting the National Conference leader Omar Abdullah, now chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, in March 2006. He lauded Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's services to people of Jammu and Kashmir. It was a remarkable departure from the party's traditional stance regarding the Abdullah family and National Conference.<sup>8</sup>

At present, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan heads the party and his father Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan is its patron. However, former Premier of PAK Sardar Sikandar Hayyat and now Raja Farooq Haider are regarded as the key political rivals of Sardar Qayyum and his son Sardar Attique since 1980s. Sikandar Hayyat has had deep-seated political disagreements with Qayyum and his son which led to a split in the party ranks in recent years but quickly both the Sardars made up.

Its leaders always claim that the MC is a substitute for the Pakistan Muslim League in PAK. It represents the traditionalist as well as the modernist segments of the society. On the other hand, Muslim League has always supported the MC in PAK politics, but when Nawaz Sharif was overthrown by General Pervez Musharraf, Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan and his son Sardar Attique wasted no time in switching their loyalties and subsequently joined the Musharraf

camp. They were rewarded by Musharraf in the 2006 state assembly elections and Attique was installed as prime minister. During the civil society movement to reinstate judges, Sardar Attique remained a staunch supporter of Musharraf.

When Musharraf was compelled to quit presidency, the anti-Attique lobby within the MC led by Raja Farooq Haider Khan got an opportunity to dislodge him in January 2009. The breakaway faction of MC-led coalition government consists of the People's Party, the People's Muslim League and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement. Interestingly, the People's Party engineered another split into the forward bloc and made the Friends' Group within a few weeks after the formation of the government. It sent shock waves into the Farooq Haider's camp of the MC and ignited intense power struggle within the coalition government which badly affected the government's working.

The two rival factions of the MC, led by Sardar Atique Khan and Raja Farooq Haider Khan, struck a secret deal to table a no-confidence motion against the incumbent Premier Sardar Yaqub Khan. The MC leaders not only buried their differences but also nominated Farooq Haider for the premiership. He won elections by securing 29 votes out of 48 and assumed power in Muzaffarabad as the ninth prime minister of the region. However, it began a new power struggle among several local stakeholders as well as Muzaffarabad vs Islamabad.

The People's Party is the major political rival of the ruling MC in the local power politics. Besides, the traditionally religious and conservative segment of the society also got alienated from the MC's inconsistent stance regarding key issues related to the future of Jammu and Kashmir, which is now supporting the religious right particularly Jamaat-e-Islami.

### **Pakistan People's Party PAK**

It was established in 1974 as a local branch of Pakistan People's Party. Ideologically, it toes the line of Pakistan People's Party and Ms Benazir Bhutto used to make appointments of its leaders. The party has

witnessed many ups and downs during the last three decades. Some of the key heavy-weight political figures left the party: Sardar Ibrahim Khan (1990), Raja Mumtaz Hussain Rathore (1998) and Barrister Sultan Mahmood (2006). However, it is still regarded as one of the largest parties in the area. The party's official position on the Kashmir issue is in line with the Pakistani national stance. Besides, it supports peaceful resolution of the Kashmir problem.

The People's Party PAK has passed various tests of political struggle and resistance. Its current leadership has deep-rooted ties with the Pakistan People's Party and particularly with the Bhutto family. Its Mirpuri leaders lavishly spent their money to organize different political events for the late Benazir Bhutto during her exile in the United Kingdom and Europe.

However, it was able to form the PAK government only when its main party was in power in Islamabad. The party has mass following and a large political cadre spread over PAK.

Currently, Chaudhary Abdul Majid from Mirpur heads the party, while Chaudhary Latif Akbar, Chaudhary Yasin and Qamar Zaman are considered as key party leaders. However, it is a matter of fact that the party lacks a charismatic and crowd-pulling leadership in the area. Besides, the above mentioned leaders quite often remain at odds with one another. None of them enjoys mass support across the PAK. Despite, PPP is the only party which offers an alternative in local politics and is known as the liberal face of PAK society.

The PPP leadership also supports the peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue and normalization of relations with India. However, occasionally it joins anti-India rhetoric and takes a hard-line stance to influence the central leadership to take Kashmiri aspiration into consideration before making flexible statements over the Kashmir issue.

Three other political outfits such as People's Muslim League, led by Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhary, Jammu and Kashmir People's Party, led by Sardar Khalid Ibrahim Khan, and Muttahida

Qaumi Movement (MQM), led by Tahir Khokar respectively maintain a reasonable presence in the PAK politics.

With few exceptions, the PAK politicians hardly adhere to their political ideology or commitments with their constituencies. Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhary is a conspicuous example of this 'freelance' politics in the region. He started his career with the Muslim Conference (Azad) and merged it into pro-Independence party, the Liberation League. Later, he joined the Peoples' Party and turned up as premier of PAK in the mid 1990s. Without taking the party's leadership into confidence, he kept on his links with the military establishment and played his politics as per its diktat. Eventually, he was shown the exit just a couple of months before the state elections. He formed his own party People's Muslim League but could not secure more than three assembly seats.

When Nawaz Sharif was about to come back to Pakistan, he realized the opportunity and initiated moves to develop ties with him. Subsequently, he sought his patronage to establish Muslim League (N) branch in PAK in cooperation with Sardar Sikandar Hayyat. However, since the MC leaders reunited their party, he is exploring the option to rejoin the People's Party.

Apart from mainstream political parties, religious parties also play a significant role to shape local politics and key social issues. In the following part of the study, the presence and influence of these groups will be discussed.

### **Religio-Political entities—Brief Background**

The emergence of religious parties in PAK is a recent phenomenon. Until 1985, the MC was regarded a religious party as its leadership demonstrated a strong commitment with the cause of Islam and Islamization of the laws.<sup>9</sup> Above all, MC as well as Sardar Qayyum were very close to Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and its founder Syed Abul A'la Maududi.<sup>10</sup> Jamaat successfully spread its influence into the MC, and later on the pro-Jamaat segment of MC formed JI in PAK.

Similarly, other religious groups, i.e., Deobandis, Baralvies, etc., also used to work closely with the MC. However, the MC had undergone mass transformation and become a traditional political entity and lost its religious fervour and identity in 1990s. It offered a great length of space for religious parties such as Jamaat. In the meantime, the uprising inside Kashmir Valley increased the religious parties' significance, and they wholeheartedly supported the armed struggle by providing material, financial backing as well as inducted foot soldiers. It is worthwhile to note that despite huge Kashmir-related activities in PAK, religious parties could not expand their political base considerably. In the following paragraphs, we will briefly look at the parties and their ideology.

### **Jamaat-e-Islami**

The party is an offshoot of Maulana Abul A'la Maududi's ideological political party Jamaat-e-Islami and has similar objectives with special focus on the so-called 'freedom movement'. Thus, notwithstanding identical party objectives, goals and functioning, it has a distinct identity. Due to the disputed nature of the area, JI PAK is not formally a branch of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan and maintains separate identity but runs its activities in close consultation with the JI Pakistan.

Supported by a dedicated and sincere cadre of workers, the Jamaat has made big inroads in the educated as well as middle class of PAK polity. It also runs a few non-governmental organizations in various areas with different names. The party, at present, has many young educated people in its rank and file. The JI holds elections regularly for the post of party head after every three years.

It has regularly been contesting elections from 1996 onwards but has not been able to earn mass support. Abdur Rashid Turabi, the JI head, has won the elections in 1996 from district Bagh only once so far.

Since the beginning of the composite dialogue process, JI has always been critical of the process. It tried hard to mobilize public

opinion against the peace process. It used every platform to prove that CBMs or dialogue process would not yield any positive result.

The JI has close links with the Syed Ali Gilani-led All Party Hurriyat Conference. It follows his line of action in local Kashmir-related discourse. Additionally, it has been supporting armed groups, particularly the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen in Jammu and Kashmir. A large number of JI-affiliated young militants went to Jammu and Kashmir to strengthen the local militant cadres. Their endeavours were glorified by the JI's media outlets in PAK and Pakistan to expand their political base and for fund-raising purposes. Given its long history of struggle for Kashmir since the late 80s, it has earned a special place for itself in this area.

### **Other Outfits**

Several other religious parties have a presence in PAK, i.e., Jamiat Ulema-e-Islami or JUI has its chapter here, led by Maulana Sayeed Yusuf Khan, son of the veteran cleric Maulana Yusuf Khan who enjoys great personal influence and respect in PAK. The JUI is the traditional Deobandi stream of thinking—with popular appeal amongst clerics and in some pockets of district Sudhnutti, Bagh and Poonch.

It is a pro-Pakistan party and believes that Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed state. Its leaders and cadre have been vigorously supporting the ongoing armed struggle inside Kashmir. It has historically preferred to support other parties instead of directly contesting elections, especially MC. The JUI has the largest network of madarassas and mosques here. It runs one of the biggest religious seminaries in Palandiri city, district headquarters of Sudhnutti.

Another religious party is Jamiat Ulema-e-Jammu and Kashmir. It is a traditional Barelvi political party, which is more moderate in its thinking and is popular with the traditional folk in villages and some parts of Mirpur and Kotli. It owns a large number of mosques and seminaries in the entire PAK. A cleric hailing from Mirpur, Pir

Attique-ur-Rehman Faizpuri, heads the party. Pir Attique is an ally of the MC and was elected as an assembly member on a special seat by the MC in 2006 and joined the cabinet in 2009.

The party maintains strong links with the British diaspora groups and receives financial support from the UK-based madarassas and mosques. Pir Attique-ur-Rehman is a member of the executive body of Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan. The party supports the idea of accession to Pakistan and also backs armed struggle inside Kashmir but it has no direct connection with any armed group.

The pro-Iran Shi'a group Tehrik-e-Islami, formerly known as the Tehrik-e-Nafaz-e-Fiqah-e-Jafaria (TNFJ), is also present here but it has limited influence as the Shia population is very limited in the area. Ghulam Raza Naqui heads the party. He is also an ally of the MC and became a member of the Kashmir Council, the Upper House of PAK, on a MC ticket. The party also supports the political ideology of accession to Pakistan.

Other groups such as the Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadeeth led by Prof Shahbuddin Madni too have a nominal presence here. They neither participate in the elections nor possess crowd-pulling leadership. These small parties support accession to Pakistan, and in the politically arena, back the MC particularly in elections.

It is a matter of fact that religious parties have grassroot organizational network and highly motivated cadre and a large network of madarassas and mosques. They may easily mobilize them and make a political appearance anytime. However, unlike in NWFP and Balochistan, they do not own big seminaries nor have a large number of madrassa students. Admittedly, Jamaat-e-Islami runs hundreds of schools, not madarassas, in entire PAK and these institutions are well-received by the public. Without any exception, all religious parties strongly subscribe to the theory of the state's accession to Pakistan and have also emerged as a vanguard of this theory over a period of time. Quite often, political observers consider them Islamabad's hard-core group in the local polity. They have

invariably been backing the armed struggle inside Kashmir. A large number of militants hail from these organizations.

### Nationalist Stream

Although, pro-independent Kashmir sentiments have always been there in PAK polity, but they came into the limelight when the J&K Plebiscite Front was formally launched in April 1965. The Front was a replica of a similar group headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in Jammu and Kashmir. It was aimed at liberating Indian 'controlled' Kashmir through armed struggle. Two different events shot it into prominence globally in the early 1970s. First, Maqbool Butt crossed over to the Kashmir Valley and got arrested and second, the Ganga hijacking case took place in 1971.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, the Kashmiri diaspora settled in the United Kingdom also started taking interest in the independence of Kashmir and formed various groups to organize masses to get their soil liberated. In fact, the 1980s made history for Kashmiri nationalists and gave them a leading role for a short while. The party, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, commonly known as JKLF, was formed in Birmingham, UK, on 29 May 1977. Within a couple of years, its branches were established, besides in different cities and towns of the UK, in different countries of Europe, USA and Middle East. In 1982, its branches were established in Pakistan Administered Kashmir and Pakistan, followed by Indian Jammu and Kashmir. In 1987, an Indian diplomat, stationed in Birmingham, was kidnapped and killed by the JKLF activists in the United Kingdom; which, immediately, resulted in the jailed Maqbool Butt's hanging in Tihar Jail, Delhi in 1984. It laid the foundation of the current armed struggle and inspired a generation to 'sacrifice' for the cause of *azadi*. Subsequently, uprising erupted in Kashmir Valley and nationalists were on the forefront of the armed struggle. These events also stimulated a lot of enthusiasm among the people of PAK and especially in the diaspora. At present, there are two distinct outfits, each of which identifies itself by the

name of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). Amanullah Khan heads the first, while Yasin Malik, who parted ways with Amanullah Khan and formed his own faction of JKLF, heads the other. In May 1994, Yasin Malik, who was released from jail (after his arrest in August 1990) declared that his faction would renounce violence as a tool to achieve the goal of independence. In March 1996, the last surviving members of the Amanullah faction, who were based in Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir under the leadership of Shabbir Siddiqui, were killed in two encounters.

As far as the JKLF Amanullah faction is concerned, it is present in all districts of PAK, especially in the major towns. But it does not have large number of following in every village and town. Amanullah Khan is a widely recognized and respected nationalist leader of Kashmiris. The JKLF filed nomination papers to contest elections in June 2001. They refused to comply with the Election Commission's precondition laid down as a clause in the nomination paper that they should support the State's accession to Pakistan. Eventually, 32 JKLF leaders' papers were rejected as they refused to budge from their position that Kashmir should be independent from both India and Pakistan.

Besides JKLF, there are a few more nationalist groups active in the state. Their activities revolve around liberation of Jammu and Kashmir state both from India and Pakistan. J&K People's Nationalist Party (J&KPNP), United Kashmir People's National Party (UKPNP) and Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party (JKNAP) are the significant groups. These groups have some pockets of influence in different parts of PAK. They occasionally highlight issues like Mangla Dam upraising project and human rights violations in Pakistan Administered Kashmir.

However, nationalists' politics in PAK are deeply divided and lack wider socio-political base. Over half a dozen parties and groups claim that they are the sole representatives of the Kashmiri soul but they never pass any test of representation. Ideologically, religious and nationalist parties are regarded as arch rivals due to

their political views with reference to the future status of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Unlike religious parties, the nationalist organizations are dreaming for an independent and sovereign state of Jammu and Kashmir. Additionally, they believe in secular ethos to run state affairs. Some of them regard Islamabad and Delhi equally as being occupational forces in the Jammu and Kashmir state. The disagreement, often, surfaces when they share public foray or the media. Their students' organizations are also divided on these ideological and political grounds.

There is no denying the fact that nationalist groups have emotional appeal and attractive slogans but they lack a well-thought out framework or a road map as to how to attain an independent Kashmir. Above all, they are divided in several groups and went through personality clashes which eroded their clout. On the other hand, the state and pro-Pakistan parties also reduced their public appeal.

### **1985-2009: Era of Democracy**

Without any fear of contradiction, the last 24 years of PAK political history may be termed as an era of political continuity, democracy and stability.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to what General Zia had previously done with the Sardar Ibrahim Hamid government in 1977, successive governments in Islamabad acted otherwise during this period. In 1988, PPP led by Benazir Bhutto came to power. The ruling party of PAK was an extension of the anti-PPP alliance Islamic Democratic Alliance, but Benazir showed political acumen and maturity and did not dislodge the MC government. Instead of removing the MC government out-right in 1988 when Zia departed from the scene in an air crash, she concentrated on expanding the PPP base in PAK. She focussed on Kashmiri Biradaris and political factions doling out funds in the name of people-works programme on the one hand and squeezing the MC government on the other.

The democratic era of '*azad* Kashmir' begins in 1985 when the long-awaited assembly elections were held. It got added importance

as many stalwarts were participating in them. Although, PPP, led by Sardar Ibrahim Khan, boycotted the polls while Liberation League, led by former president KH Khurshid (1924-88), and Tehreek Amal Party, led by former president Major General Hayat Khan, turned up in an alliance and contested the elections against the MC. Jamaat-e-Islami PAK also backed the above mentioned parties at each level.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, it was widely believed that the MC had been enjoying the backing of powerful federal establishment because of Sardar Qayyum's personal close ties with General Zia. The elected government took over in June 1985 under the premiership of Sardar Sikandar Hayyat Khan while Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan was sworn in as President of Pakistan Administered Kashmir'. It is interesting to note that for the first time the PAK government completed its tenure without any interruption from the federal government.

### **Islamabad's 'Carrot and Stick' Role**

The first real crisis for the Pakistan Administered Kashmir government came with the assembly elections in May 1990. The PPP and its allies secured majority seats in the assembly winning even a few seats in the Kashmiri refugee constituencies in Pakistan as well. In Punjab, the results, 100 per cent in favour of the MC, were as expected as strongly contended by the then chief minister, Nawaz Sharif. Instead of the party head Sardar Ibrahim, the legislative assembly in June 1990 elected PPP leader Mumtaz Hussain Rathore as the premier (Jul 1990-Jul 1991) under the guidance of then PM Benazir Bhutto. The decision led to a split in the PPP and the dissenting Sardar Ibrahim established the 'Jammu Kashmir People's Party.' When the elections for the PAK presidentship were to be held, the PPP government was dissolved in Pakistan. As an interim setup prime minister, on 24 August 1990, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi appointed five new Pakistani assembly members in the PAK Council. Two days later in a joint session with the council, the PAK Assembly re-elected Sardar Qayyum as the president, defeating Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry by 32 to 23 votes.



The Islamabad-appointed ministers and members turned the tables and made Sardar Qayyum president; otherwise Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry had the majority in the house.

MC again received impetus and strength when Nawaz Sharif's government was constituted in Pakistan while due to the internal crisis, Mumtaz Hussain Rathore's rule weakened in PAK. Rathore resigned and announced fresh elections in June 1991. The Muslim Conference won 32 of the 40 elected seats while Rathore's People's Party won only two. There is no doubt that the 1991 PAK election campaign differed from all the previous elections in several respects. Rathore was not satisfied and immediately declared rigging as source of MC landslide victory in the elections. Declaring the elections null and void, he relied on legal grounds to stay in power. However, on 5 July under Article 53 of the PAK constitution, he vacated office.<sup>14</sup>

### **1991–2006: Muslim Conference Rule**

Events were moving rapidly in different directions in Muzaffarabad as, with Islamabad's backing Qayyum Khan resigned from the presidency on 20 July and was later re-elected to the legislative assembly on the seat reserved for the Ulema. On 29 July, he was elected as the Premier while Sardar Sikandar Hayyat took office as president. The Sardar Qayyum government completed its five-year term smoothly while highlighting the then Kashmir uprising around the globe. Because of his numerous foreign trips and overstay at Islamabad, Sardar Qayyum lost his grip on the administration back home. He was charged with nepotism and corruption. Even his own party leader and president of PAK issued a charge sheet against his rule and termed this period as the dark years of PAK history.<sup>15</sup> They appointed 480 employees by bypassing the Public Service Commission. It invited huge criticism from across the civil society and finally the high court nullified the back-door appointments.<sup>16</sup> These factors led to a poor performance of the MC in the elections held in June 1996.

### **1996–2001: The People's Party Rules**

Support by the federal government, unification of two PPP factions and incumbency factor were the main reasons behind the victory of PPP. A relatively new face of Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry emerged on the political horizon of PAK in the 1996 elections.<sup>17</sup> He was elected as the prime minister while Sardar Ibrahim Khan took over the charge as the president of PAK.<sup>18</sup> Several federal ministers and PPP stalwarts toured the interior of Pakistan Administered Kashmir to address rallies and canvass for PPP candidates. They travelled from place to place in government helicopters and wagons, criticizing the MC regime and holding out tall promises of amelioration of the masses in the event of PPP victory. It is also alleged that Social Action and other federal funds were freely distributed to win over votes.

In Pakistan, government interference in the polling for refugee seats was more aggressive. Ministers and high officials of the Punjab government openly worked for the PPP candidates and used all sorts of tactics to ensure their success. As a result, the MC and other parties boycotted the polls.

However, the fact remained that the MC had lost the support and confidence of the masses in view of its poor performance during its term. Several charges were leveled against it including lavish spending of public funds and resources for personal gains. The small region of Pakistan Administered Kashmir, financially dependent on the largesse of Pakistan government, was saddled with an unwieldy cabinet consisting of over two dozen ministers, advisors, special assistants and other officials. Funds were frittered on foreign visits, unnecessary establishments, and purchase of scores of costly vehicles, so much so that the region was nicknamed as 'Pajero-Land'. The top brass lived in princely style and were escorted by swarms of vehicles on their jaunts. To add insult to injury, the PAK bosses had virtually shifted the headquarters of the government from Muzaffarabad to Islamabad, where they spent most of their time. The top tiers of bureaucracy followed suit resulting in heavy drain on government exchequer and great inconvenience to the

people. Corruption remained rampant in the region. The government indirectly encouraged its dissemination. The enactment of Kashmir Civil Servants Act 1992, which legalized back-door appointments in civil service, was a black chapter in its tenure. It disregarded merit, by-passed the Public Service Commission and encouraged favoritism and nepotism in the official recruitment policy.<sup>19</sup>

The internal dissensions within the party, particularly the undeclared war between the PAK president and the prime minister, precipitated its downfall. The charge sheet publicized by the president was used as a trump card against the government by the opposition in its propaganda campaign during the election.<sup>20</sup>

In short, the decade of 1990s is marked with respective federal and provincial governments' interference in the PAK elections. The successive governments had consistently been trying to make sure victory of their allies in PAK political scene. The refugees' seats had been a soft target of the Punjab and federal governments. It is widely believed that the refugees' seats were rampantly rigged. History stands witness to the fact that the people of PAK mostly follow the line set by the federal government. They have to face tremendous problems whenever Muzaffarabad does not have good working relations with Islamabad. Therefore, local voters usually prefer allies of Islamabad to rule in PAK for the benefit of development.<sup>21</sup> They had seen the result of bitter working relations between Sardar Qayyum-led PAK government with Bhutto's federal government in 1972-75, which ended with the removal of the Qayyum government and his long incarceration. Likewise, when Nawaz Sharif took power in Islamabad in 1990, his administration made it very difficult for PPP government to work smoothly. It led to dissolution of assembly and subsequent arrest of Mumtaz Hussain Rathore. The daily, *The News*, published from Rawalpindi explained this situation in a very apt way:

The labyrinthine nature of 'azad Kashmir' politics and the complex linkages between the power holders in Islamabad and Muzaffarabad have always defied a rational explanation for the political develop-

ments that have taken place with mind boggling frequency in the state. A political change in Pakistan implied an inevitable change in 'azad Kashmir', irrespective of the strength and legality of the government.<sup>22</sup>

However, the Kashmir uprising on the Indian side of the border brought new dynamics into the local political scene. National media and pro-independence groups persuaded successive governments in Islamabad to not interfere in the internal matters of PAK as it provides India an opportunity to malign Pakistan. *The News*, in its editorial comment, reminded:

Islamabad too needs to deal with the situation in AJ&K with caution, delicacy and circumspection. It does not all help Pakistan's international case on Kashmir to have AJ&K leaders carp every day about Islamabad's unjustified intervention in the state's affairs. Politics, for once, should be put aside for national interest. And national interest demands that the AJ&K house should be quickly put in order to pursue with complete single-mindedness the cause of Kashmiri self-determination.<sup>23</sup>

## Muslim Conference—2001 Onwards

### Kashmir Issue Brings Political Stability

Following this line, All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), persistently demanded Islamabad to maintain a good working relationship with Muzaffarabad. Benazir Bhutto returned to power for the second time in 1993 after the resignation of both President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on 18 July 1993. She and her PPP colleagues were very keen to topple the Sardar Qayyum government, but timely intervention of the APHC leaders, particularly, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq's telephone call, saved his fate.<sup>24</sup> On top of that, Pakistan army and its key institutions emerged as key stakeholders in Kashmiri resistance and continuity in the government also suited them. Meanwhile, two-party system emerged in local political landscape

which also helped sustain the successive governments in Pakistan Administered Kashmir. Although, many problems cropped up during this period between the PAK and federal governments, but both managed them successfully for their respective interests, particularly to avoid Indian criticism.

In 2009, Pakistan Muslim League (N) was to extend its branch in Pakistan Administered Kashmir. Key political leaders of the area were willing to join the party but the establishment scuttled the move by reuniting two rival factions of the MC led by Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan and Raja Farooq Haider Khan respectively. It is said that the establishment argued that it might send wrong signals across the LoC that Pakistan has already settled for the status quo. Of late, a section of the Kashmiris has accused Islamabad of having nasty designs to divide Jammu and Kashmir by granting self-rule to Gilgit-Baltistan. In this connection, the establishment indirectly opposed the formation of the Muslim League in PAK. In a way, once again the Kashmir issue prevented the formation of Muslim League (N) in PAK.

### Islamabad's Covert Role

Thus, the involvement of Islamabad in PAK affairs gave an amazing twist to local politics and set new game rules which revolved around personal likes and dislikes as well as favoritism. In July 2001, the last assembly elections were held which were won by the MC led by Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, son of former Prime Minister Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan. No major charges of rigging and manipulation were leveled by any party including the main opposition party, that is, the PPP. However, Islamabad was not in favour of the idea of letting the party-head form a government. Inside sources confirm that Sardar Qayyum was told categorically that the Musharraf regime was not at ease with him and hence he nor his son Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan could contest for the post of President or PM. Likewise, a two-star Major General, Mohammad Anwar Khan, was retired from the Army 24 hours earlier to be elected as the President of the state on the ticket

of the MC.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, in the 2006 elections, the Muslim Conference got undue favours from the Musharraf regime hence, the other political rivals complained that they did not get a level playing field. Of late, the said scenario has been drastically changed once elected government assumed power in Islamabad in late 2007.

The relationship between PAK and Islamabad has almost always been witnessing ups and downs. The ruling elite of Muzaffarabad, including the opposition, seldom pose any challenge to Islamabad and seek its blessing to capture power. Barring a few exceptions, successive PAK governments have adopted a docile attitude and displayed readiness to follow the dotted line of the government in Islamabad. The ruling elite has historically shifted its allegiance from Zia to Benazir Bhutto and from Nawaz Sharif to General Musharraf. This opportunism is credited with the ensuring of political stability in the state, albeit at the cost of democratic values and good feeling among the inhabitants of the state towards the federal government. PAK leaders often use their connections in military and with strong Punjabi *baderis* to ensure access to the power circles in Islamabad.<sup>26</sup> In other words, loyalty to the government of Pakistan, not merely to state of Pakistan, is deemed a prerequisite for the political and economic viability of a government in Muzaffarabad.

### Lack of Good Governance

Since the inception of PAK different stakeholders have been used to level charges of corruption and nepotism against the ruling party. However, it became talk of the town when the MC, led by then Prime Minister Sikandar Hayyat, assumed power in 1985. No matter it was true or otherwise, the PM and his family were heavily criticized by the opposition parties for corruption and nepotism. The building of new palaces by him in Muzaffarand, Kotli and his home-town was referred as an evidence of his misuse of power. Ironically, neither opposition went court nor his successor government appointed any commission to establish him and his cabinet guilty of corruption.

Likewise, when PPP took over power in 1990, the MC in general and Sardar Qayyum in particular took it on very harshly and he wrote a letter to president of Pakistan. He referred to the size of the cabinet and alleged that everyone was busy in money-making. Furthermore, the PM had lost his grip on administration and each minister was functioning as an independent person.<sup>27</sup>

The successive governments have shown a strong tendency to create special government jobs to accommodate their respective loyalists and party workers resulting in an administrative burden on the national exchequer. Similarly, since 1990, all elected governments have taken special care of accommodating around half of their elected members as cabinet ministers. It has over a period of time become a tradition that president and prime minister and the top administration spends most of their time in Islamabad. For instance, Sardar Qayyum remained in power in Pakistan Administered Kashmir from 1991 to 1996 for five years and exactly for 1852 days. Out of these he spent only 104 days in Muzaffarabad and Pakistan Administered Kashmir. Rest of the time was spent in Pakistan, in the palatial buildings of Kashmir House, Islamabad.<sup>28</sup>

Subsequently, PPP became the ruling party and its prime minister also followed the same tradition. According to a published account in 1998, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry spent just 51 days in Muzaffarabad in the entire year.<sup>29</sup> The top brass of the bureaucracy was also rarely available in the capital. Quite often, the PM and top officials summoned meetings in Kashmir House in Islamabad. It made Islamabad a de facto capital of PAK. At times, the PM tried to justify his absence by saying that his government was facing threat from Islamabad for destabilization of his government. Noted Muzaffarabad-based journalist Tariq Naqash says: "He would give all along the past three and a half years to justify his stay in Islamabad."<sup>30</sup>

Misuse of funds in the name of the Kashmir cause is also a booming business here since the early 1990s. When PPP government

assumed charge in 1996, PM and other top notch accused the previous government of corruption and many interesting stories came to the fore. For example, MC was accused that its leaders had misused Rs 56 crore out of the treasury in the name of the Kashmir cause. Strangely enough, the MC president, Sardar Sikandar Hayyat also endorsed such blame.<sup>31</sup> Ironically, the MC leadership refused to render accounts of Rs 56 crore and used the pretext of Kashmir. Sardar Qayyum said that if he rendered details of the expenditure, India would be informed by 'those who mattered' about the whole thing.<sup>32</sup>

Sardar Qayyum, during his five years, spent more than 300 days outside Pakistan in the UK, USA, Europe and some other countries, mostly along with his family members. One All Parties Kashmir Conference was held in London at the cost of rupees one crore and 56 persons attended the conference including close relatives and family members and a number of time servers and toadies. As regards the 'success' of this conference, back in Islamabad, Sardar Qayyum said that not a single English newspaper published a single line about this 'conference' on Kashmir.<sup>33</sup>

The PPP government did not lag behind and continued the tradition set by its predecessor. According to a published report, Rs 22 lakh were spent during the premier's visit to US just to announce in the Pakistani Press that the PAK PM was coming back to Islamabad after his historic success and should therefore be given a hero's welcome. Likewise, advertisements worth Rs 35 lakh were published in the London Press to inform the Kashmiris and Pakistanis that Chaudhry Sahib (read Sultan Mahmood) was flying back home via London where he would brief the people of his marvelous deeds performed in America towards the liberation of Kashmir.<sup>34</sup>

These are just a few examples; otherwise there are lot of instances which prove that the ruling elite often misuses name of Kashmir cause and even suffering of the people for its vested interests and political gains. The Sikander-led government (2001–2006), was also not an exception.

Likewise, Sardar Attique had also been touring across the world on the name of Kashmir cause with his family members and friends. He appointed key government officials from his own tribe to strengthen his gripe on the administration and promote family interest during his brief stint in power (2006–2009).

### Conclusion

Pakistan Administered Kashmir has a unique status and political tradition within the Pakistani system of governance. Interestingly, it is neither an independent state nor constitutionally part of Pakistan. Its future status is hinged with the final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir state. Besides, it does not make any impact in Pakistan's internal politics as PAK has no representation in national assembly or senate, unlike Indian 'controlled' Kashmir.

The Federal government often tries to promote their allies in local politics and sometimes has fully backed them. It creates a bad taste in general and particularly frustrates new generation. Above all, the tribal politics and diaspora investment makes local politics and cultural realities intriguing as well as complex. The recent elections show that different stakeholders and businessmen also take part in elections and they spend huge amounts of money to buy voters and even to get party tickets.

## References

### Chapter 2

- 1) Vast literature on Kashmir's cultural identity is available. The latest addition, Cultural Heritage of Kashmir, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Kashmir (1997)
- 2) Punjabi, Riyaz, *Kashmiriyat: The Mystique of an Identity*, IIC Quarterly, New Delhi, Spring (1991)
- 3) Abdullah, Sheikh Mohd, *Aatish-i-Chinar* (An Autobiography) Srinagar, Kashmir (1986) pp 158–159.
- 4) Abdullah, Sheikh Mohd, *op. cit.*, pp 237–241.
- 5) Abdullah, Sheikh Mohd, *op. cit.*, pp 230–243.
- 6) Punjabi, Riyaz, *Kashmir Imbroglia: The Socio-political Roots*, Contemporary South Asia, London (1995) pp 39–53.
- 7) Abdullah, Sheikh Mohd, *op. cit.*, pp 835
- 8) *The Daily Srinagar Times*, Srinagar, Kashmir, 24 December, 2004.

### Chapter 3

- 1) This paper is the outcome of a research project on 'Conflict and Institutional Change in India', which forms part of the Crisis

- States Programme Phase One. The CSP is based in DESTIN London School of Economics and Political Science.
- 2) Jean Jacques Rousseau, 1968, *The Social Contract*, translated and introduced by Maurice Cranston, Harmondsworth, Penguin, pp 60.
  - 3) Victoria Schofield, 2004, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War*, New Delhi, Viva Books, pp xv.
  - 4) Sumantra Bose is one of the few scholars on Kashmir who has tried to grapple with this specific issue by building in the interests of other groups living in Kashmir into his solution for the problem. See his 2003, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict: Paths to Peace*, Delhi, Vistaar Publications.
  - 5) Neera Chandhoke, 1999, *Beyond Secularism: The Rights of Religious Minorities*, Delhi, Oxford University Press.
  - 6) Wayne Norman, 1999, 'Theorizing Nationalism (Normatively): The First Steps' in Ronald Beiner edited *Theorising Nationalism*, Albany, SUNY Press.
  - 7) Ulrich Schneckener, 2001, 'Making Power-sharing Work: Lessons from Successes and Failures in Ethnic Conflict Regulation', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol 39, no. 2, pp 203-228
  - 8) Michael Hechter, 2000, *Containing Nationalism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp 146
  - 9) The argument is of course directly applicable to Kashmir which is in the midst of conflict, but it can be generalized to other states.
  - 10) The Indian Union was forged through two separate and parallel processes. In the first instance, the immediate post-Independence government fashioned constituent states of the federation out of the territory formerly known as British India on the twin principles of linguistic identity and territorial contiguity. In the second instance, hitherto autonomous princely states were incorporated into the Union through instruments of accession signed by the rulers.
  - 11) Kashmir was part of Ranjit Singh's Sikh empire.
  - 12) The state which is multilingual, multireligious and multicultural consists of three regions, each of which has distinctive characteristics. The region of Jammu is predominantly inhabited by Hindus, with Muslims being concentrated in the districts of Doda and Rajouri. Approximately half of the population of Ladakh, which is sparsely populated, is Buddhist, and the other half is composed of Shi'a Muslims and Hindus. In Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, Shi'a Muslims predominate in the northern areas of Hunza, Gilgit, Nagar and Baltistan, and Sunnis in Kotli, Poonch, Mirpur and Muzaffarabad. Groups in that part of Kashmir are as culturally distinct from each other as in Indian Kashmir.
  - 13) Mridu Rai, 2004, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights and the History of Kashmir*, Delhi, Permanent Black, pp 27.
  - 14) A Standstill Agreement vide the Government of India Act 1935 ensured the continuation of essential relations in communication, trade and posts between a princely state that had not decided upon its options and one or both dominions.
  - 15) At the time of Partition of India, Jammu and Kashmir including Aksai Chin stretched over an area of 222,236 sq kms; the Valley constituted 10 per cent of the total area, Jammu 14.4 per cent, and the frontier districts as much as 75.6 per cent. According to the 1941 Census, Muslims formed 77 per cent of the population and Hindus 20 per cent.
  - 16) Zutshi quotes Sheikh Abdullah as saying in a public meeting after his release that the question of accession would be decided in the best interests of the people of Kashmir. He is reported to have stated that "freedom before accession" was important for the people of the state. Chitralkha Zutshi, 2003, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity and the Making of Kashmir*, Delhi, Permanent Black, pp 306.

- 17) On the other hand, the entire Hindu and Sikh population of Muslim—majority districts in western Jammu districts—Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Rawalkot, Kotli, Mirpur and Bhimber—were forced to migrate or killed.
- 18) The revolt had begun earlier but suppressed by the Maharaja's soldiers.
- 19) However, they have never been formally accepted as a part of Pakistan, and as part of the northern territories along with Baltistan, they remain under Pakistani administration without the same rights and privileges as the rest of the provinces in the country.
- 20) The government of India had insisted that it could not send troops to an independent country.
- 21) Since 1949, the cease-fire line has remained the *de facto* border between the two parts of Kashmir on the one hand and between India and Pakistan on the other. During the 1972 Shimla negotiations between India and Pakistan, the cease-fire line was renamed the Line of Control (LoC). The LoC stopped short at the Siachen Glacier which extends for 40 miles to the *de facto* border with China. In 1984, Indian troops took control of part of the glacier and now Indian and Pakistani troops confront each other in the highest war zone in the world.
- 22) Today, 45.62 per cent of the original territory of the state is with India, 35.15 per cent with Pakistan, and 19.23 per cent with China. The valley of Kashmir consists of 15.8 per cent of the area of Indian J&K, Jammu consists of 25.9 per cent, and Ladakh 58.3 per cent. According to the 2001 Census, the population of Kashmir totals 10.01 million, of which Muslims form 64.2 per cent, Hindus 32.2 per cent, and others 3.6 per cent. Muslims form 95 per cent of the population in the Valley.
- 23) Cited in Riyaz Punjabi, 1995, 'Kashmir Imbroglio: The Socio-Political Roots', *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol 4, no. 1, pp

- 39–53, in pp 47. However, as Punjabi notes, Sheikh Abdullah declared in a public meeting in September 1947 that "Our first demand is complete transfer of power to the people in Kashmir. Representatives of the people in a democratic Kashmir will then decide whether the state should join India or Pakistan", *ibid*, pp 46.
- 24) Cited in *ibid*, pp 49.
- 25) Victoria Schofield, *op. cit.*, pp xiii.
- 26) Vergehes Koithara, 2004, *Crafting Peace in Kashmir: Through a Realist Lens*, Delhi, Sage Publications, pp 53.
- 27) Sten Widmalm, 1998, 'The Rise and Fall of Democracy in Jammu and Kashmir' in Amrita Basu and Atul Kohli edited *Community Conflicts and The State In India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press.
- 28) This provoked the ire of the right wing party, the Praja Parishad, which composed mainly of Jammu-based Hindus and dominated by the communal Hindu Mahasabha was worried about the fate of Hindus in the state if the plebiscite favoured Pakistan. The Parishad demanded a final settlement of the Kashmir issue. To date, the BJP, the right wing party in India, demands the scrapping of article 370 and full integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian Union.
- 29) Cited in Punjabi, *op. cit.*, pp 51.
- 30) Sten Widmalm, *op. cit.*, pp 153–54.
- 31) The Bill permitted those who had left Jammu and Kashmir for other areas including Pakistan to return.
- 32) Sumantra Bose cites a news magazine which described the MUF as an 'improvised ad hoc bloc of diverse groups consisting of educated youth, illiterate working class people, and farmers who expressed their anger at the family rule of the Abdullahs, government corruption and lack of economic development.' For the first time, the Valley was sharply divided between the NC and its support base and thousands of people who entered

- the political process under the umbrella of the MUF. Bose, *op. cit.*, pp 48.
- 33) Sumantra Bose, *op. cit.*, pp 48–50.
  - 34) *Agricultural Census Reports of J&K*, 1971 1976, 1981, 1985, Jammu, Government of Jammu and Kashmir. Also Siddhartha Prakash, 2000, 'Political Economy of Kashmir since 1947', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 10 June, pp 2,051–2,060.
  - 35) NS Gupta and NC Prabhakar, 1988, *Socio-Economic Development of Jammu and Kashmir*, Jammu, Jay and Kay Press, pp 51.
  - 36) PS Verma, 1992, *Jammu and Kashmir at the Political Crossroads*, Delhi, Seema Publications.
  - 37) The NC was voted out of power in the 2002 elections by a relatively new political party the Peoples Democratic Front in alliance with the Congress.

#### Chapter 4

- 1) *Kashmiriyat*—a culture of synthesis, understanding and humanism can provide a stabilizing force in the subcontinent, if its vitality is to be accepted. For further reading, see author's 'Kashmir, *Kashmiriyat* and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah' in *Kashmir Times*, 13 September 2006.
- 2) In 1586, Mughal Emperor Akbar annexed Kashmir. Kashmiri historians generally locate the genesis of Kashmir identity crisis from Mughal annexation of Kashmir. For further details, see Balraj Puri, *Abdullah Era: Evolution of Kashmiri Identity* (University of Kashmir, 1982) pp 2. Also see Chitrlekha Zutshi, 2003, *Language of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity and the Making of Kashmir*, Permanent Black.
- 3) MJ Akbar, 2002, *Kashmir Behind the Vale*, Lotus Collection Roli Books, pp 31.

- 4) A few British voices rose too in sympathy. Robert Thorp writes: "Towards the people of Cashmeer we have committed a wanton outrage, a gross injustice, and an act of tyrannical oppression which violates every human and honourable sentiment which is opposed to the whole spirit of modern civilization and is in direct opposition to every tenet of religion we profess." Robert Thorp, *Cashmeer Misgovernance*, London, 1870.
- 5) Walter Lawrence, 1895, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Oxford University Press, pp 2.
- 6) The silk industry provided employment to a considerable population of the city of Srinagar and surrounding areas. As a result of the importance of silk to the economy of the state, it remained a government monopoly managed by the Department of Sericulture.
- 7) Sisir Gupta, 1966, *Kashmir—A Study in India-Pakistan Relations*, Asia, pp 29.
- 8) The educated Muslims of Kashmir started a Reading Room Party near Fateh Kadal in Srinagar, where most of them used to meet and discuss the current topics of the day. For details see PN Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, Kashmir Publishing Company, Srinagar, 1941, pp 98.
- 9) NN Raina, *Hegemony of the Working People: A Specific Feature of our Freedom Movement*, Studies of Kashmir, Council of Research, Special no., Vol III, November 1978, pp 13.
- 10) *Khalid*, Srinagar, 30 April 1945.
- 11) *Naya Kashmir*, 1945. It is only in this context that the sweeping land reforms between 1947–50 can be understood. In 1950, the state enacted its most popular land reform act known as Big Estates Abolition Act. This legislation set a maximum limit of 22¾ acres as holdings of land owners.
- 12) Inder Malhotra, *The Separatists' Seminar*, no. 58, 1964, pp 30. Also see, Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam*,



- Rights and the History of Kashmir*, Permanent Black, 2004, pp 282.
- 13) Gulam Ahmad Mehjoor, cited in PN Bazaz, *The History of the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, Karachi National Book Foundation, 1976, pp 296.
  - 14) Excerpts from the longer quotation, carved in marble at Sheikh Abdullah's Memorial, Hazratbal, Srinagar.
  - 15) Steins note in his translation of *Rajatarangini*, pp 388.
  - 16) *Nilamata Purana*, English translation by Ved Kumari, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, 1973, Vv. 12 FF.
  - 17) Akther Mohi-ud-Din, 'Identity of the Kashmiri People', *The Journal of Central Asian Studies*, Kashmir University, Srinagar, Vol 1, no. 1, 1990, pp 66.
  - 18) Peer Gias-u-Din, 'J&K Problems and Contradictions of Regional Identity', *The Kashmir Times* (Jammu), 2 February 1999.
  - 19) GMD Sufi, 1979, *Islamic Culture in Kashmir*, Light and Life Publishers, New Delhi, pp 19-20.
  - 20) MJ Akbar, 2002, pp 99.
  - 21) AS Anand, *The Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir: Its Development and Comments*, Universal Law Publishing Co, 1998, pp 208.
  - 22) ZM Quraishi, 1979, *Elections and State Politics of India: A Case Study of Kashmir*, Sundeep Prakashan, Delhi, pp 224.
  - 23) Somnath Dhar, 'Freedom Struggle of Jammu and Kashmir State as seen in Folklore', in M Yasin (Ed) *History of Freedom Movement in Jammu and Kashmir*, Light and Life Publishers 1980, pp 234.
  - 24) Syed Mir Qasim, 1992, *My Life and Times*, Allied, New Delhi, pp 119.

- 25) Riyaz Punjabi, 1992, 'Kashmir: The Bruised Identity' in Raju GC Thomas (Ed) *Perspectives on Kashmir*, Westview Press, Boulder, pp 150.
- 26) Balraj Puri, 1993, *Kashmir Towards Insurgency*, Orient Longman, pp 67.
- 27) Chitralekha Zutshi, pp 15.
- 28) Peer Gias-u-Din, 1999.
- 29) Quoted by MJ Akbar, *Kashmir Behind the Vale*, pp 9.
- 30) Idris Shahid, 'It is a Ploy', *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, 11 June 2005.

## Chapter 6

- 1) Demography forms all kind of patterns here—ranging from almost equal distribution of communities (as in Baderwah), to predominance of one community (as in Doda), predominance of one community in the towns and of other community in surrounding villages, one community villages, villages with mixed population, etc.
- 2) The context of the regional discrimination is defined by the elite interest and elite competition. State jobs, which remain the major source of employment within the state, have been the major points of regional irritation. Lot of regional discontent was also generated especially in the decades of 60s and 70s around the admission to the professional institutions. A feeling has generally prevailed in the region that, in these matters as well as in the distribution of resources, Jammu region has been discriminated.
- 3) Despite their identification with the Kashmiri culture, the people even of the Kashmiri belt of Doda emphasize their marginalization by arguing that in the nomenclature of the state 'Jammu and Kashmir' their position is emphasized by

- 'and' that hyphenates 'Jammu' with 'Kashmir', and hence they are ignored by the elite of both the regions.
- 4) The dominant political concerns of people of these Muslim-dominated areas, therefore, rather than being linked to the separatist politics, emanate from the position of their backwardness and marginalization. As these areas are far-flung, mostly in treacherous mountainous belt, and are peripheral in the process of development and distribution of resources, the political demands here mostly have their developmental basis. Hence, rather than the demand for *azadi*, these areas echo with the demands like the organization of Hill Councils, jobs in government sector, political reservations and other concessions. The identity politics that resounds these areas is linked with the local competition for resources between the Gujjars who have attained the Scheduled Tribe status and the Paharis who are demanding such a status.
  - 5) Balraj Puri, 1966, *Jammu: A Clue to Kashmir Tangle*, Delhi.
  - 6) Report of the Jammu and Kashmir Commission of Inquiry, December 1968, pp 96-102.
  - 7) *Ibid.*
  - 8) Soon after taking over the power, the NC Government had constituted the State Autonomy Committee (SAC) and the Regional Autonomy Committee (RAC). While the SAC had recommended the restoration of autonomy enjoyed by the state in pre-1953 period, the RAC, contesting the existing definition of regions, had recommended fresh reorganization of regions. Instead of the known three regions of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh, it had recommended eight regions, dividing Jammu and Kashmir into three regions each and dividing Ladakh into two regions.
  - 9) During the late 90s, there was lot of talk in Jammu about 'trifurcation of the state' and a separate state for Jammu. The trifurcation politics received a boost from the reactive politics of Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) and the Panun Kashmir.

- While the LBA had been raising the demand for Union Territory for Ladakh, the Panun Kashmir had been demanding a separate 'homeland' in the Valley for the Kashmiri Pandits who had migrated *en masse* from Kashmir in 1990.
- 10) For a detailed overview of Balraj Puri's arguments, refer to his *Simmering Volcano: Study of Jammu's Relations with Kashmir*, Sterling Publishers, Delhi, 1983; *Jammu and Kashmir: Triumph and Tragedy of Indian Federalism*, Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1981; *Jammu: A Clue to Kashmir Tangle*, Delhi, 1966.

## Chapter 7

- 1) Zafar Choudhary, 'Tribute to the Land of Moon', *Epilogue*, Jammu, Vol 1(11), November 2007, pp 2.
- 2) The phrases are taken from Ravina Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control: Performance of Politics on the Disputed Borders of Ladakh*, India, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2004, pp 14 and 110.
- 3) Ravina Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control*, *op. cit.*, pp 116.
- 4) *Ibid.*, pp 105.
- 5) In a seminar on 'Issues and Challenges before Ladakh in the 21st Century', organized jointly by the University of Jammu and Ladakh Joint Students' Federation, Jammu, at the University of Jammu on 9 January 2008, a university professor, with seemingly utmost concern, asked one of the university professors: "What would happen to Ladakh if democracy is restored in China?" This, actually, sums up the racial stereotyped perception of Ladakhis in India even by the highly-educated citizens.
- 6) Aggarwal says, "As a result of my involvement in Ladakh, I learned to notice the differential patterns of treatments of situations that I had taken for granted in the past. For example, I had my first experience of being turned away from a discotheque in India in a five-star hotel in Delhi when I was

- accompanied by my Ladakhi friends. Smiling patiently at my consternation, my friends pointed out that *chinkis* were not exactly welcome in such establishments... At another time, as I was walking on the crowded street with Ladakhi friends, a man in a passing car yelled out '*hato Gorkhe*' (Move over, Gorkhas)." Ravina Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control*, *op. cit.*, pp 11–12.
- 7) *Ibid*, pp 13–17. For an excellent elaboration on the "performance of politics" and "politics of performance" in the border areas of Ladakh, see Ravina Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control*, *op. cit.*
  - 8) The old Silk Route connects Ladakh and Western Tibet via Demchok, a place about 300 km southeast of Leh, well-connected by motorable road. On the Chinese frontier, near Demchok, at less than an hour away lies Tashigang on excellent road that links Tibet and Xinjiang. The reopening of the trade route will help Ladakh link up its traditional economic ties with Western Tibet, Lhasa and the Central Asian towns of Yarkan, Kashgar and Khotan, thereby making Ladakh's economy more stable and sustainable in the long run. It will also provide employment opportunities to lots of frontier people on both sides of the border while making Ladakh a favourite spot of religious tourism as it will reduce the journey to Kailash Manasarovar from one month, through the difficult route along the Lipulekh pass in the Kumaon hills, to just two days via Demchok in Ladakh.
  - 9) For an elaborate analysis, see Ravina Aggarwal, 'From Utopia to Heteropia: Towards an Anthropology of Ladakh' in Henny Osmaston and Nawang Tsering (Eds), *Recent Research on Ladakh* 6, Motilal Banarsi, Delhi, 1997, pp 21–28.
  - 10) For an excellent account on this, see Martijn van Beek, 'Identity Fetishism and the Art of Representation: The Long Struggle for Regional Autonomy in Ladakh', PhD Dissertation, Cornell University, Denmark, 1996.

- 11) Ladakh have had important links with Tibet in terms of religion, culture and politics. In fact, Ladakh had been a part of the Tibetan empire for a relatively long term. For an excellent elaboration on the monastic relations between Ladakh and Tibet, see Sonam Joldan 'Traditional ties between Ladakh and Buddhist Tibet: Monastic Organization and Monastic Education as a Sustaining Factor', *The Tibet Journal*, vol XXXI (2), 2006, pp 69–88; and for trade and pilgrimage relations see, Sonam Joldan, 'Relationship between Ladakh and Buddhist Tibet: Pilgrimage and Trade', *The Tibet Journal*, Vol XXXI (3), 2006, pp 43–76.
- 12) The distinctiveness of Ladakh as a separate cultural identity (different from Tibet) is very soundly argued by Aggarwal. She narrates a Ladakhi song to vindicate this. 'Tibet is good but Ladakh is better' is the motto of the song. Ravina Aggarwal, 'From Utopia to Heteropia', *op. cit.*, pp 27.
- 13) This perception has been reinforced in John H Crook (1980): 'Social Change in Indian Tibet', *Social Science Information*, Vol 19 (1), pp 139–66; AH Franke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, (2 vols), S Chand & Co, New Delhi, 1972; AH Franke, *A History of Ladakh*, Oriental Books, New Delhi, 1972; and AH Franke, *Ladakh: The Mysterious Land*, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1978.
- 14) For a detailed explanation on this line of argument, see Martijn van Beek, 'Identity Fetishism and the Art of Representation', *op. cit.*
- 15) For detail analysis, see Sonam Joldan 'Traditional ties between Ladakh and Buddhist Tibet', *op. cit.*, pp 69–88; and Sonam Joldan, 'Relationship between Ladakh and Buddhist Tibet', *op. cit.*, pp 43–76.
- 16) Ladakh is presently divided into two districts: Leh (where Buddhists constitute the majority and Sunni Muslims the minority) and Kargil (where Shi'a Muslims constitute the

- majority and Buddhists the minority). Though, there is no data on the exact number or the proportion of the population (between the Buddhists and the Muslims) in Ladakh, the Census of India 2001 provides that the total population of Leh is 117,232, and the total population of Kargil is 107,138.
- 17) Martijn van Beek, 'Dangerous Liaisons: Hindu Nationalism and Buddhist Radicalism', in Satu P Limaye, Mohan Malik and Robert G Wirsing (Eds), *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii, 2004, pp 193–218; also available at <http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Edited%20Volumes//ReligiousRadicalism-andSecurityinSouthAsia.pdf>.
  - 18) The LBA came into being the late 1930s—then known as the Young Men Buddhist Association. The basic purpose of its formation was to champion the political cause of the Ladakhi Buddhists. Martijn van Beek in his study conceives it to be brainchild of some Kashmiri neo-Buddhist leaders under the banner of Kashmir Raj Maha Bodhi Sabha. However on paper, LBA enumerates its objectives in a very different/apolitical tinge. In Chapter II of its Constitution, the LBA reveals its objective as preservation and promotion of "religious and cultural traditions of Ladakh", dissemination and promotion of the teachings of Buddhism with its method of teaching, and to develop institutions for pursuing these objectives (among others). But these claims remain only on paper.
  - 19) However, during these 800 years of independence, Ladakh's boundaries fluctuated at different period of its history. Sometimes, it included much of Western Tibet. For a precise analysis of the historical lineage of Ladakhi kings, see Shridhar Kaul and HN Kaul, *Ladakh Through the Ages: Towards a New Identity*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1992.
  - 20) Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, himself owing an allegiance to the ruler of Lahore, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, sent his General Zorawar Singh to invade Ladakh in 1844. Zorawar succeeded after a series of wars with the then king of Ladakh.
  - 21) In the post-Partition scenario, Pakistan and China illegally occupied 78,114 sq km and 37,555 sq km of the state, respectively, while the remaining part of the state acceded to India. Pakistan also illegally gifted 5,180 sq km of this area to China. Ladakh, comprising the areas of present Leh and Kargil districts, became one of the seven districts of the state. Ladakh constitutes 67.6 per cent of the total area in India's possession. The data has been retrieved from 'History of Leh', <[http://leh.nic.in/district\\_profile.htm](http://leh.nic.in/district_profile.htm)>, and is also given in Ladakh Buddhist Association, *Why Union Territory for Ladakh: Memorandum to the Members of Parliament*, Camp, New Delhi, 2000, pp 9.
  - 22) This was conveyed in a memo by the LBA in 1949. For details, see Balraj Madhok, *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh: Problems and Solution*, Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987, pp 68–71; and Ladakh Buddhist Association, *Why Union Territory for Ladakh*, op. cit., pp 4–5.
  - 23) For an insightful analysis of the economic hardships faced by the Ladakhis during the Dogra rule, see Abdul Gani Sheikh, 'Economic Conditions of Ladakh in the Dogra Period' in Martijn van Beek, Kristoffer Brix Bertelsen and Poul Pederson (Eds), *Ladakh: Culture, History, and Development Between Himalaya and Karakoram; Recent Research on Ladakh* 8, Sterling Publications, New Delhi, 1999, pp 339–349.
  - 24) Ladakh Scouts has become one of the most decorated and courageous regiments of the country. It is the first regiment to receive the Chief of the Army Staff Flag. Its bravery in the Kargil war was exemplary and has proved beyond doubt its indispensability in any future high-altitude war as the soldiers from the lowland India find it extremely difficult to adapt to the geo-climatic conditions of the region. Furthermore, every music album released in Ladakh (at least one in a month),

- generally contains a song praising Indian pluralism and its graciousness as a nation.
- 25) Its leaders proposed three alternative proposals: (1) The Maharaja should govern Ladakh directly without tagging it on to Kashmir Valley, or (2) Ladakh to be amalgamated with the Hindu majority Jammu to form a separate province, or (3) Ladakh to be permitted to join East Punjab.
  - 26) For detail, see Balraj Madhok, *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh*, *op. cit.*, pp 68–71; and Ladakh Buddhist Association, *Why Union Territory for Ladakh*, *op. cit.*, pp 2.
  - 27) The phrase is of Zafar Choudhary. For details, see Zafar Choudhary 'Tribute to the Land of Moon' *op. cit.*, pp 2.
  - 28) The LBA severely accused: "In the post-Independence period, we have been reduced to the status of slaves in our homeland. The impact of oppressive rule by the J&K Government over us has obliterated our cultural and social ethos." For detail, see Ladakh Buddhist Association, *Why Union Territory for Ladakh*, *op. cit.*
  - 29) Sonam Chosjor, 'Winter woes in Ladakh', *The Kashmir Times*, Jammu, 1 March 2008.
  - 30) The phrase is taken from P Stobdan, 'Ladakh–Baltistan and the Dialogue Process—I & II', *The Kashmir Times*, 21 & 22 December 2006.
  - 31) This phrase is of Martijn van Beek. For detail, see Martijn van Beek, 'Dangerous Liaisons', *op. cit.*, pp 213; and also see P Stobdan, 'Ladakh–Baltistan and the Dialogue Process' *op. cit.*
  - 32) See Martijn van Beek, *op. cit.*; and also see P Stobdan, *op. cit.*
  - 33) Sonam Chosjor, 'Ladakhi Politics: Myths versus Facts and Rhetoric versus Reality I & II', *The Kashmir Times*, Jammu, 4–11 January 2007.
  - 34) For more detail, see LBA's memorandum to Nehru in 1949, reproduced in Balraj Madhok, *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh*, *op. cit.*, pp 183–4.
  - 35) Martijn van Beek argues that to make these claims, they were skilled by the neo-Buddhist leaders of Kashmir Raj Bodhi Maha Sabha (KRBMS). These leaders were well aware of the value of organized political representation on communal lines. The LBA, which was organized and functioned under their patronization, commenced its agitation-based politics under their guidance. For detail, see Martijn van Beek, 'Identity Fetishism and the Art of Representation' *op. cit.*; and Martijn van Beek, 'Dangerous Liaisons' *op. cit.*
  - 36) This juncture for the upbeat communal politics of the LBA was provided by a minor dispute over division of ancestral property between a Buddhist brother and a Muslim sister in a village, Sabu, which is about five km away from Leh. The issue was exploited by the LBA.
  - 37) For detailed elaboration see Shridhar Kaul and HN Kaul, *Ladakh Through the Ages*, *op. cit.*
  - 38) For a complete analysis, see Martijn van Beek, 'Identity Fetishism and the Art of Representation' *op. cit.*
  - 39) Like the 1969 agitation, the agitation of 1989 was also the fallout of a minor incident (of clash) between few Buddhist and Muslim youths, which was exploited by the LBA to launch a violent agitation.
  - 40) Army had to be called out and curfew was clamped in Leh and Kargil towns following the tensions between Buddhists and Muslims. The alleged desecration led to clashes between Muslims and Buddhists at Bodh Kharboo in Kargil District after some unidentified persons allegedly tore off the holy book in a mosque there. For an elaborate discussion on the communal tension of 2006, see Sonam Chosjor, 'Communal clashes in

- Ladakh: Evil designs of vested interests', *The Kashmir Times*, Jammu, 26 February 2006.
- 41) The memorandum also made a worrying appeal: "We are the followers of Buddha. Taking to arms and violence is against our basic philosophy... We are also against the violent path followed by people elsewhere in the country." Ladakh Buddhist Association, *Why Union Territory for Ladakh*, op. cit., pp 4.
  - 42) These leaders accused that the LUTF is being dominated by few vested interest leaders having royal and spiritual background.
  - 43) *Daily Excelsior*, Jammu, 29 December 2002.
  - 44) Told in an interview to *Epilogue*, Jammu, Vol 1 (11), November 2007, pp 1,617.
  - 45) Muslims of Leh and Kargil districts, *History Repeated in Ladakh: The Muslim Viewpoint of the Ladakhi Agitation of 1989*, Leh, 1989, pp 15.
  - 46) King Jamyang Namgyal (AD 1560–1590) of Ladakh had married a Muslim princess of Skardo namely Gyal Khatoon. During those days, the king used to invite traders from Kashmir in Leh Palace for trade. Under the influence of Gyal Khatoon, Jamyang Namgyal let some the traders settle down in the lower areas around the palace (which now falls in the heart of Leh town), and they married local Buddhist women. The Sunni Muslims of today's Ladakh are mixed descendents of Kashmiris and Ladakhis and are known as Argons.
  - 47) Yoginder Sikand, 'Inter-community Relations in Leh, Ladakh', available at <http://www.countercurrents.org/comm-sikand130206.htm>.
  - 48) Bettina Zeisler puts a very strong case for it. She believes that due to the slight dialectical variances throughout the region, it becomes a bit difficult to introduce a standard vocabulary and grammar. Therefore, according to her, central Ladakhi dialect, which is accepted as the standard dialect by all, should become the right choice as it is understood by everyone within Ladakh.
  - Bettina Zeisler, 'Borrowed Language: Passive Assimilation or Active Incorporation of Modern Concepts' in Martijn van Beek, Kristoffer Brix Bertelsen and Poul Pederson (Eds), *Ladakh: Culture, History, and Development between Himalaya and Karakoram; Recent Research on Ladakh* 8, Sterling Publications, New Delhi, 1999, pp 389–401.
  - 49) The entire episode of this attack on the magazine, and the nature and contour of the politics of Ladakhi language are covered up in *Ladags Melong* (Mirror of Ladakh), Spring-Summer Vol. 2 (1–2), 2003.
  - 50) The entire traditional and almost all the modern local literature in Ladakh have been written in classical Tibetan. The Tibetan script, generally known as Bodhi in Ladakh, is taught in all schools with classical Tibetan grammar, which is very difficult for students to understand.
  - 51) For detail on the differences between Modern Ladakhi and Classical Tibetan and the difficulty of using Classical Tibetan in Ladakh, see Sonam Wangchul, 'Ladakhi Language Change: Progress or Decay?', *Ladags Melong* (Mirror of Ladakh), Leh-Ladakh, Vol. 4 (2), 2005.
  - 52) John Bray, 'Ladakhi History and Indian Nationalism', *South Asian Research*, vol. II (2), 1991, pp 115–133.
  - 53) A letter from Gulzar Hussain Munshi (Secretary, Kargil Social and Cultural Organization) stands testimony to this:  
*"I would suggest that we call our written language 'Ladakhi' rather than Bodhi or Bhoti. These names sound like they are related to Buddhists only, whereas we Muslim Ladakhis also speak the same language. I am well-wisher of the written language: we tried to implement it in Kargil, but there was resistance. If we call it Ladakhi or Ladaksi Skat [Ladakhi language] it would be more acceptable to all parts of our Ladakhi society."* *Ladags Melong* (The Mirror of Ladakh), Spring-Summer 2003, Vol 2 (1–2), pp 6.

- 54) Pritish Nandy, 'Ladakh Is Too Innocent for Bloodshed,' Rediff on the Net, 9 November 2000, quoted in Martijn van Beek, 'Dangerous Liaisons' *op. cit.*, pp 193.

## Chapter 8

- 1) Mridu Rai, 2004, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights and the History of Kashmir*, Delhi, Permanent Black. Chitralekha Zutshi, 2003, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir*, Delhi, Permanent Black.
- 2) Mridu Rai, *ibid.*
- 3) Chitralekha Zutshi, *op. cit.*, pp 3.
- 4) *Kashmir Times*, 22 January 2001.
- 5) *Kashmir Times*, 23 January 2001.
- 6) The Panun Kashmir, one of the prominent organizations of Kashmiri Pandits, has this explanation to offer for the mass exodus of the Pandits: "Kashmiri Pandits were driven from their homeland after a campaign of intimidation and harassment was launched against them by the military-wing of the secessionists. Kashmiri Pandits were forced from their hearths and homes at the point of gun. The objective of this ethnic cleansing was to create a minority-free Kashmir Valley where the goal of Islamization could be easily forced on the ordinary people." <http://www.panunkashmir.org/fundamentalism.html>.
- 7) Henny Sender, 1988, *The Kashmiri Pandits: A Study of Cultural Choice in North India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press.
- 8) For details see <http://www.panunkashmir.org/index.html>.
- 9) Mridu Rai, *op. cit.*, pp 13–14.
- 10) Mridu Rai, *ibid.*, pp 40.
- 11) For details see Prem Nath Bazaz, *History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, New Delhi: Kashmir Publication House, 1954.
- 12) Chitralekha Zutshi, *op. cit.*, pp 224.
- 13) *Ibid.*

- 14) ON Trissal, 'Kashmiri Pandit—At the Crossroads of History', in Virender Grover (Ed) *The Story of Kashmir: Yesterday and Today*, Vol 2, Delhi, Deep and Deep, 1994, pp 737.
- 15) According to Sikand, for many young Muslims, shrines are seen as un-Islamic and therefore are subject to criticism in Islamic discourse—hence face opposition by some Islamic groups like Hanafi Deobandis, Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami, Ahl-e Hadith—all of whom, he says, have made a limited presence in the recent years. He has noted down the spread of Deobandis, especially the Tablighi Jamaat, a Deobandi inspired movement, that has been working in the area since 1970s with the purpose of purging the Muslim society of un-Islamic practices, intense tension between them and the shrine custodian. Yoginder Sikand, 'Scripturalist Islam in Kashmir and the Possibilities of Dialogue', *countercurrents.org*, 26th September 2006, <http://www.countercurrents.org/kashmir-sikand260906.htm>.

## Chapter 9

- 1) See MK Teng and GL Gadoo, 'White Paper on Kashmir', published by a Kashmiri Pandit Organization called Joint Human Rights Committee.
- 2) For the political background of the crisis in Kashmir see Alastair Lamb, *The Disputed Legacy*, 1991, UK, Roxford Books; Sumantra Bose, 1997, *The Challenge in Kashmir: Democracy Self-Determination and a Just Peace*, New Delhi, Sage Publications. Also see his book published in 2003, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*, Vistar Publications, Delhi. And for the economic roots of the conflict see Siddhartha Prakash, 'Political Economy of Kashmir since 1947', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 10 June 2000.
- 3) See my book published in 2004, *Islam in Kashmir: Fourteenth to Sixteenth Century*, Srinagar, Oriental Publishing House.

- 4) For details see TN Madan, 1981, *Religious Ideology and Social Structure: The Muslims and Hindus of Kashmir*. In Imtiyaz Ahmad (Ed) *Ritual and Religion among Muslims in India*, New Delhi, Manohar Publications. Also see Islam in Kashmir *op. cit.*, Chapter, 'Religions Identities in the Syncretic Environment of Kashmir'.
- 5) The best example in this regard is the stark differing positions taken by the Muslims and the Kashmiri Pandits vis-à-vis the Dogra rule. While the Muslims stuck their guns to get freedom from the Dogra state with its overt Hindu tenor, the Kashmiri Pandits, in the words of Prem Nath Bazaz, "played the historic role of anti-revolution to a finish", *Inside Kashmir*, Srinagar 1941, pp 291.
- 6) Kalhana, the famous poet chronicler of 11th Century Kashmir, offers the first poetic discourse on Kashmiri patriotism. See his *Rajatarangini*, (Tr.) Stein MA, Vol I, pp 9–10. For details on articulations of Kashmiri regional belonging from the 14th to the mid-19th Century, see Chitralkha Zutshi, 2003, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity and the Making of Kashmir*, Delhi, Permanent Black, pp 16–55. It is also significant to note that notwithstanding the supporters of Dogra state, the Kashmiri Pandits were the first to raise the slogan of "Kashmir for Kashmiris", which ultimately culminated into the introduction of the provision of State Subject in 1929. And it was RC Kak, the Kashmiri Pandit Prime Minister of the last Dogra ruler Maharja Hari Sing, who spearheaded the movement for independent Kashmir instead of joining with either of the Dominions following the 1947 Partition of India. PN Bazaz, *The History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, Srinagar, (Reprint) 2002, Chapter 13, 'On Eve of Partition'.
- 7) Despite the presence of many leaders and political parties in Kashmir on the eve of 1947 and after, the fact, however, remains that none enjoyed as much mass following as Sheikh

- did which he won on account of his persistent fight against the feudal, autocratic and sectarian Dogra state since 1931. See Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, 'Kashmiris Struggle for Freedom', Vol II, Part I, pp 798.
- 8) That the Sheikh gravitated increasingly in favour of nationalist politics and preferred Kashmir's accession with India without making his intentions public, see PN Bazaz, *The History of Struggle for Freedom*, pp 157. Also see Saraf, *ibid*, pp 798.
- 9) It is unfortunate that the Plebiscite Movement has not yet attracted the scholarly attention although there is a profuse information available in a variety primary sources. One of them is Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Awaz-i-Haq: Mujmoa-i Taqreer, 13 January 1958 to 7 March 1958 (Srinagar: Mahzi Raishullarti). In addition to this, the Information and Publicity Wing of the Plebiscite Movement published the presidential addresses and the proceedings or the annual and special sessions of the movement. The other categories of sources are the newspapers and journals of the period, archives of the electronic media, official documents, personal dairies and field work, and oral history.
- 10) The veneration of the Sheikh by the masses is based on my personal observation.
- 11) It may be significant to note that until 1989–90 one would only hear the Kashmiri Muslims yearning: '*Pakistan kar bani?*' (When Kashmir would become Pakistan?); the term *azadi* is a post-1989 phenomenon.
- 12) This fact is well known to us; however, it is unfortunate that no work has been written on these leaders so far.
- 13) Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp 286–87.
- 14) Islam in Kashmir, *op. cit.*, pp 246–272.
- 15) For Anjuman-i Tabligul Islam, see Showkat Hussain Keng, *Siral al Rukhari*, Srinagar, 2002.



- 16) For Muslim Auqaf Trust see, *Trust Deed*, Srinagar: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Auqaf Trust, 1973.
- 17) For details on Indra-Abdullah Accord see *Kashmir ki Khasusi Position Mahadal ki Roshni Main*, Srinagar: National Conference. *Sheikh Abdullah ka Role: Indira-Sheikh Accord ki Roshni Main*, Srinagar: National Conference; GR Najar, *Kashmir Politics from Accord to Election*.
- 18) Based on my personal information.
- 19) *Ibid.*
- 20) Muslim United Front was a conglomeration of many political and religious organizations which, giving a united front to the hegemonist National Conference, closed their ranks temporarily, and was successful in wooing a huge number of traditional supporters of National Conference.
- 21) The mass rigging and political persecution by National Conference was the hallmark of 1986 state elections acting as the immediate, if not the underlying, cause of militancy in Kashmir.
- 22) In this regard, mention may be made of Amanullah Khan, Maqbool Bhat, Shabir Ahmad Shah, Yasin Malik, Ishfaq Majid Wani, Abdul Hamid, etc.
- 23) For a brief account of the Jamaat-e-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir, see Saad-ud-din, *Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu wa kashmir Ka Sarsari Tanif* (Srinagar: Jamaat-e-Islami); Qari. Saif-ud-Din. *Wadi Pur Khar* (Srinagar: *Markazi Maktaba Jammat-e-Islami Jammu wa Kashmir*). Also see Afroz Ahmad Bisati, *Jamaat-e-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir*, MPhil thesis, Shah Hamdan Institute of Islamic Studies, Kashmir University.
- 24) See *Dastur-e-Jamati Islami Jammu Wa Kashmir*.
- 25) This slogan was commonly raised during the election campaigns.
- 26) Immediately after assuming power in 1975, the Sheikh Government imposed a ban on Jamaat-e-Islami schools. This

- mainly affected the urban centres especially Srinagar where, on account of the lack of popular support, the Jamaat could not manage changing the nomenclature of their schools to escape from the persecution of the dominant political tradition.
- 27) Jamaat-e-Islami took this decision in the late 70s of the 20th Century.
- 28) There is no doubt that during its initial days the Kashmiri Muslims, for various reasons, warmly welcomed the militancy leading to mass recruitment into it.
- 29) In response to the threatening issued by the militants, wine shops and cinemas were closed in 1989. At this time, Jamaat-e-Islami had not yet joined the militancy.
- 30) It may be mentioned that occasionally in the State Assembly, the Jamaat-e-Islami members used to raise the question of imposing a ban on wine in Kashmir.
- 31) There were two groups in Jamaat-e-Islami—moderates and extremists. The extremists were led by the leaders like Sayyed Ali Shah Geelani who advocated that alongside fighting elections Jamaat-e-Islami should not forget the Kashmir Question, instead it should demand for its solution. This thinking gained much support among its young members following the political persecution Jamaat-e-Islami suffered at the hands of National Conference which regarded the Jamaat as a great threat to its domineering position.
- 32) For details on Ahl-e Hadith of Kashmir see Khan, BA, 'Ahl-e Hadith Movement of Kashmir', PhD Dissertation, Department of History, Kashmir University.
- 33) *Ibid.*
- 34) I owe this information to my colleague Dr Bashir Ahmad Khan for which I am grateful to him.
- 35) Based on my personal conversation with many followers of Tablighi Jamaat.

- 36) It may be mentioned that until 1989 the Tablighi Jamaat could not make much headway in Kashmir, except winning a few followers especially in Srinagar where Jamaat-e-Islami had not succeeded in carving a space for itself. The main reason for its slow progress in the rural Kashmir was the stiff opposition it faced from the Jamaat-e-Islami.
- 37) For details see *Anjuman-i Nusrat-ul-Islam, Khaslasi Shumara*, published by Anjuman-e-Nusrat ul-Islam, Srinagar, 1981.
- 38) Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, 2001 (Reprint), *Kashmakash*, Srinagar, pp 68–69.
- 39) Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, 1977, *Kashmiris Struggle for Freedom*, Vol I (1819–1946), Lahore, pp 488.
- 40) PN Bazaz, *op. cit.*, pp 184.
- 41) PN Bazaz, *op. cit.*, Chapter 20 “Misgovernment and Hooliganism”.
- 42) According to the earlier available census reports, the Shi’is constituted five per cent population in the late 1890s. See Lawrence, *op. cit.*, pp 284.
- 43) Unlike the Sunni Muslims, the Shi’is in general do not eat food prepared by the Pandits. They settle their disputes through the institution of imam and their woman generally observe pardah. According to Walter Lawrence, the Shi’is “will not even touch oil or use ink which has come into contact with a Pandit”, Lawrence, *op. cit.*, pp 284.
- 44) For the abject poverty of the rural folk of Kashmir on the eve of 1947, see Ali Mohammad Wani, ‘Agrarian Structure of Kashmir (1846–1947)’, PhD Dissertation, Department of History, Kashmir University.
- 45) In 1931, there were just 18 Muslims enrolled in SP College of Srinagar, see Glancy Commission Report.
- 46) Based on my personal interview with the contemporaries of the period.

- 47) In 1950, the government passed the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, under which a proprietor could retain only 22¾ acres of land, and the right to ownership in land in excess of this unit was transferred to the tillers.

## Chapter 11

- 1) Max Arthur MacAuliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol 1, pp 163–169.
- 2) Walter R Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Chinara Publishing House, Srinagar, pp 300–301.
- 3) Khushwant Singh, 1963, *A History of Sikhs*, Princeton, USA, Vol 11, pp 136–141.
- 4) The objects of Singh Sabha Movement were: ‘Revival of the Teaching of the Gurus’ and ‘Production of Religious Literature and Campaign against Illiteracy’.
- 5) Ravinder Jit Kaur, *Political Awakening in Kashmir*, APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, pp 72–74.
- 6) *Ibid*, pp 72–75.
- 7) Khushwant Singh, *ibid.*, pp 136–141.
- 8) The birth place of Guru Nank Devji used to be managed by Udasi Mahant Naryan Dass, who lived in the Gurudwara with his mistress. He was known to have invited dancing girls to the sacred premises. The local Sikhs protested and threatened to expel him by force. The Mahant asked for police protection and also hired nearly 400 thugs to safeguard and defend his interests. On 20 February 1921, a Jatha of Akalis led by Lachman Singh Dharovalia entered the Gurudwara. Thugs attacked the Jatha with swords, hatchets and firearms. They were then dragged to a pile of logs, which had been collected earlier and burnt. Flames consumed about 130 men. Khushwant Singh, no. 4, pp 198–99.
- 9) National Archives of India, File no. 45, 1921.
- 10) National Archives of India, File no. 18, 1922.

- 11) Jammu and Kashmir Archives File no. J-28, 1924.
- 12) Ravinder Jit Kaur, *Political Awakening in Kashmir*, APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, pp 78–79.
- 13) Jammu and Kashmir Archives, File no. 43, 1924.
- 14) *Ibid.*
- 15) Jammu and Kashmir Archives, File no. 13-89/A, 1924.
- 16) *Ibid.*
- 17) Jammu and Kashmir Archives, File no. 435, 1924.
- 18) Jammu and Kashmir Archives, File no. 13-89/A, 1924.
- 19) National Archives of India, Foreign Department, Political, August, 1924, no. 25.
- 20) Jammu and Kashmir Archives, File no. 435, 1924.
- 21) Ravinder Jit Kaur, *Political Awakening in Kashmir*, APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, pp 79–80.
- 22) *Ibid.*
- 23) National Archives of India, Home Department, Political, June 1924, no. 25.
- 24) *Ibid.*
- 25) National Archives of India, Home Department, Political, November, 1924, no. 25.
- 26) SC Mittal, *Freedom Movement in Punjab*, Concept Pub. Company, Delhi, pp 178.
- 27) *Ibid.*, pp 178–79.
- 28) AS Narang, *Storm Over the Sutlej*, Gitanjali Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983, pp 56.
- 29) Ravinder Jit Kaur, 'Sikhs in Kashmir Politics', *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. XXVII, no. 2, 2003, pp 62.
- 30) Budh Singh, *Prem Khilari, An Autobiography*.
- 31) Ravinder Jit Kaur, *Political Awakening in Kashmir*, APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, pp 80–81.
- 32) HL Handa, *History of Freedom Struggle in Princely States*, Central News Agency, New Delhi, pp 253.

- 33) Ravinder Jit Kaur, 'Sikhs in Kashmir Politics', *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. XXVII, no. 2, 2003, pp 63.
- 34) *Ibid.*
- 35) Narayan Bose, *Kashmir at Perennial Crossroads: Towards Understanding the Kashmir Crisis*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, pp 70.
- 36) *Ibid.*
- 37) *Greater Kashmir* (Local Daily), Srinagar, 13 February 2001.
- 38) *Ibid.*
- 39) *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, 19 February 2001.
- 40) *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 27 July 2001.
- 41) Ravinder Jit Kaur, 'Sikhs in Kashmir Politics', *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. XXVII, no. 2, 2003, pp 65.
- 42) *Ibid.*

## Chapter 12

- 1) Today one part is under Indian control and is known in India as the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, an integral part of the Indian Union. It is known to Pakistanis as Occupied Kashmir. The other part, which is less populated, is under Pakistani control and on the other side of the Line of Control that separates these two zones. It is known in Pakistan as *Azad Jammu and Kashmir*, or "free", "liberated" Jammu and Kashmir. The Indians call this region Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and of late as Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK).
- 2) One may mention here the role played by the brother of Maharani Tara Devi in arousing anti-Muslim sentiments in Jammu.
- 3) In this mayhem, the extremists killed the Jatthas of Gujjars, ostensibly being taken to Pakistan, near Satwari at Jammu. Similarly, the Kashmiri Tongawalas, who on request of Sheikh Abdullah had brought Dogras families from Kashmir, were also

put to death on their way back to Kashmir near Nagrota, at the outskirts of Jammu.

- 4) These include Nazir Hussain Samnani, Shabir Slaria, Wazira Begum, Ch Mohd Hussain (Bajalata), Zubeda Begum, Sheikh Abdul Rehman.

### Chapter 13

- 1) MA Stein (Tr.), 2007, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir*, 1-3 (Reprint Ed), Srinagar, Saujanya Books.
- 2) George Abraham Grierson, 2005, *Linguistic Survey of India*, 11 Volumes in 19 Parts, Delhi, Low Price Publications.
- 3) PNK Bamzai, 1994, *Culture and Political History of Kashmir*, Delhi, MD Publishers.
- 4) KM Pannikar, 1989, *Gulab Singh: 1792-1858*, Srinagar, Gulshan.
- 5) MJ Akbar, *Kashmir: Behind the Vale*, Delhi, Viking.
- 6) PN Bazaz, 1954, *The History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, New Delhi, Kashmir Publishing Company.
- 7) RK Parmu, 1959, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, Delhi, People's Publishing House.
- 8) AQ Rafiqi, *Sufism in Kashmir*, Delhi, Bharita Publishing House.
- 9) Walter Lawrence, 2005, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Srinagar, Gulshan.
- 10) PN Bazaz, *op. cit.*
- 11) PNK Bamzai, 1994, *Culture and Political History of Kashmir*, Delhi, MD Publishers.
- 12) PN Bazaz, 1954, *The History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, New Delhi, Kashmir Publishing Company.
- 13) A mention of an instance or two of the ridiculous understanding of the developments in Kashmir among men in high positions in Delhi would be apt here. George Fernandes, who was then

- a minister in the Union cabinet, was deputed to Kashmir to look into the situation and suggest remedial measure. While in Srinagar, and after being briefed by interested elements, he said in Srinagar that the Muslim youths had taken recourse to armed violence as a protest against, what he called, the 'dominance of Pandits in government services'. A senior Congress leader, also in Srinagar to study the situation, suggested that pro-India forces should be mustered and a procession taken out through the city to silence the agitating Muslim youths.
- 14) As far as divorce petitions are concerned, those filed by women are as many as filed by men, if not more. In 1995, out of the 250 divorce petitions before the concerned court in Jammu and Kashmir, 30 pertained to Pandits. In 2001, Pandits cases numbered 300 in a total of 976. The number is still higher today.
  - 15) The Pandit psychiatric cases are generally suffering from hypertension, depression, anxiety and stress disorders, phobias, panic attacks, post-displacement trauma disorders, hypertension neurosis, sleep disorders, delusional complicacies and psychotic problems. Fear psychosis, depression, anxiety disorders, hypertension and suicidal tendencies have been noticed markedly, both among exiled Pandits and Muslims in Kashmir. Women and children are among the worst victims.
  - 16) Tyndale Bisco, *In Sunlight and Shade*, London, Seeley, Service and Co., 1922.
  - 17) Walter Lawrence, 2005, *Valley of Kashmir*, Srinagar, Gulshan.
  - 18) Kashmir Pandits take pride in being the citizens of India, a vibrant democracy, the world's largest, which grants every citizen the right to freedom to live in their homes in security, honour and dignity, irrespective of religious faiths. And yet, the Pandit is still waiting, through the 17th year of his forced exile, to be given his fundamental right to occupy his own

home in his own land of birth. Meanwhile, the government of India is informing the Parliament, year after year, that the return of Pandits to Kashmir is the 'top-most' priority of the Jammu and Kashmir government. The state government has taken up this refrain too. The ground reality, however, is that the issue of Pandits' return home, seems to be, if at all, at the bottom of all priorities and non-priorities of the governments in Delhi and Srinagar.

- 19) A report, produced by J&K Centre for Minority Studies, after a comprehensive survey of the socio-economic conditions of the displaced Pandits, says that though the government's policy was the 'safe return of the displaced community in honour and dignity', but in truth, 'no progress has been made in this direction'. The Report adds that there is 'no comprehensive policy on the issue of return and rehabilitation of the Pandits'. The Report says, 'In view of the ongoing violence and Pakistani hand, return, if ever will be successful only as a part of overall settlement with necessary guarantees. There is no possibility of return in near future, and any attempt at partial return could be counter-productive, and, possibly, disastrous'.

## Chapter 15

- 1) My translation; see *Raina's Ghalib*, Writers Workshop, Calcutta, pp 51.
- 2) Edward W Said, *Orientalism*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978; Peregrine 1985.
- 3) 2005, *The Argumentative Indian*, Penguin India.
- 4) 2006, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny (Issues of our Time)*, WW Norton, USA.
- 5) See my 'Valley of Love', *Frontline*, 1 August 2003, pp 84.
- 6) My interview with Mr Kaul was an eye-opener in many ways. Among the many details he provided of community interactions, organized Muslim support to Pandit activities and so on, he also

gave me a list of some 69 destitute and abandoned Kashmiri Pandits who are now wholly in the care of Muslim families in the Valley. My own experience had been overwhelming, and I could not resist contrasting the situation in Gujarat where not only Muslims icons, shrines, and landmarks are systematically erased, but Muslims are routinely asked to 'go to Pakistan'.

- 7) MJ Akbar, 2002, *Kashmir: Behind the Vale*, Roli Books, pp 85.
- 8) Balraj Puri, 1981, *Jammu and Kashmir: Triumph and Tragedy of Indian Federalism*, Sterling Publishers, pp 43.
- 9) MJ Akbar, *ibid.*, 85–86.
- 10) See my 'Grand Narrative of Terrorism', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27 December 2003–2 January 2004; Vol. XXXVIII, nos. 51–52, pp 5,327–29.

## Chapter 16

- 1) Jayalal Kaul, 1973: *Lal Ded*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi.
- 2) Jaishree Kak Odin, 1999, *To The Other Shore: Lalla's life and Poetry*, Vitasta, New Delhi, pp XI, XII.
- 3) SL Sadhu, 1995, *Successor of Kalhana: Kashmiri Pandits: A Cultural Heritage*, (Ed) S Bhat, S Kumar, New Delhi, pp 447.
- 4) PN Bazaz, 1959, *Daughters of the Vitasta*, Pamposh Publication, New Delhi.
- 5) Amartya Sen, 2005, *The Argumentative Indian*, Penguin India, New Delhi, pp 220.
- 6) Quoted in Jaishree Kak Odin, 1999, pp 24.
- 7) *Ibid.*
- 8) For details see 'Kashmiri Women Down the Ages: A Gender Perspective' by the author, *Himalaya and Central Asian Studies*, Vol. 6, nos. 3–4, July–December 2002.
- 9) PN Bazaz, *ibid.*, pp 3.

- 10) MA Stein, 1979, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, Vol I and II, New Delhi, pp 28; PN Bazaz, 1959, *Daughters of the Vitasta*, Pamposh Publication, New Delhi, pp 1; PNK Bamzai, 1994, *Culture and Political History of Kashmir*, Vols. I, II, III, MD Publications, New Delhi, pp 183.
- 11) *Ibid.*
- 12) Uma Chakravarti, 1999, 'Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism and Script for the Past', in Kumkum Sangri and Sudesh Vaid (Ed), *Recasting Women*, Kali for Women, New Delhi, pp 28.
- 13) Radhika Coomaraswamy, 2005, 'Human Security and Gender Violence', *Economic and Political Weekly*, October–November, Bombay.
- 14) Rita Manchanda, 2005, 'Women's Agency in Peace Building, Gender Relations in Post-Conflict Reconstruction', *Economic and Political Weekly*, October–November, Bombay.
- 15) Muzamil Jaleel, *Indian Express*, New Delhi, 9 March 1999.
- 16) *Indian Express*, Srinagar, 31 March 1999.
- 17) Radhika Coomaraswamy, 2005, pp 4,735.
- 18) *Ibid.*
- 19) Amartya Sen, 2005, *The Argumentative Indian*, Penguin India, New Delhi; Amartya Sen, 2006, *Identity And Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, Penguin India, New Delhi.
- 20) Amartya Sen, 2005, pp 350–351.
- 21) He comments that people are encouraged to join politics mainly as one community or another and what Mahatma Gandhi called 'vivisection of a nation'. It is an attempt to win a war by recruiting religion on your side (*The Economic Times*, 7 March 2006). More, he demolishes stereotyped and oversimplified notions of connectivity between religious and political identities. Individuals can be deeply religious and yet politically moderate. Conversely, one can espouse sectarian politics, and yet be liberal and unorthodox insofar as his religious identity

is concerned. Contrasting between the religiosity and secular politics of several prominent leaders in pre-Independence India, he cites the example of Jinnah and Maulana Azad on the one hand, and Gandhi and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, on the other. Jinnah advocated 'two-nation' theory and founded the Islamic Republic of Pakistan though he was hardly a staunch Muslim in his personal life. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the President of the Indian National Congress, was a deeply religious Muslim. Similarly, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the leader of Hindu Mahasabha was not a devout Hindu, yet he invoked religion in politics. Gandhi, on the other hand, was deeply religious in his personal life and social behaviour, but a staunch secularist in politics (*The Argumentative Indian*– 307). Again, Sen points out that Gandhiji was very religious but very non-sectarian and secular in politics, while Jinnah focussed on religious divisions in politics in terms of different communities of Muslims and Hindus but was not very religious himself. The strength of a religious identity does not imply it has to interfere in politics (*Times of India*, New Delhi, 2 April 2006). In *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, Sen further broadens focus on linkages between "choiceless singularity of identities" or the religious identities in which we are born and the violence it has generated all over the world. He argues that a 'solitary' religious identity impoverishes social possibilities by 'belittling human identity' and limiting social choices. The problem is further complicated by an illusion of unexamined assumptions on the complex phenomena of identities, or privileging religious identity over many other identities. This religion centred approach, Sen notes has dangerous implications for the humanity at large. Religious identity has been used as a political weapon by fundamentalists of all hues—from parochial West to Islamist terror and chauvinist Hindutva brigade.

## Chapter 17

- 1) Joan D Mandle, 'How Political is the Personal?: Identity Politics, Feminism and Social Change'.
- 2) 'Manto's Open It: Engendering Partition Narratives' by Sarvar V Sherry Chand.
- 3) Shahnaz Kouser is one of the four women whose stories figure in a moving documentary film 'The Final Autumn' by Delhi based journalist-photographer Sonia Jabbar. The documentary was first screened in 2003 and it was perhaps for the first time that one could see the other side to Shahnaz's story.
- 4) *Kashmir Times*.
- 5) *Women, War and Peace in South India: Beyond Victimhood to Agency*, (Ed) Rita Manchanda, Delhi, Sage Publications.
- 6) Prem Nath Bazaz, *Daughters of Vitasta*.
- 7) Joan D Mandle, 'How Political is the Personal?: Identity Politics, Feminism and Social Change'.

## Chapter 18

- 1) Rekha Chowdhary, 'Diversity and Conflict: Lessons Drawn from Jammu and Kashmir'.
- 2) The Muslims of the region display many similarities to the Hindus, in their traditions and lifestyles. For example, there is a peculiar feature visible among the Muslims of the region, who are largely converted and belong to Chibalis indigenous racial group, and that is, to retain the particular surnames with their Muslim names. These surnames are usually remnants of their, before conversion, Hindu names and signifies their belonging to a particular caste.
- 3) The Gujjar women are also subjected to strong patriarchal norms. They have no Property Rights, the preference for male child is rampant and there are widespread discriminations against them in most of the fields.

- 4) During the Amarnath agitation, it was alleged that the administration forcibly took away and tried to cremate the dead body of Kuldeep Raj Verma and police was accused of 'abusing, insulting and assaulting' Shilpi, when she tried to stop them.
- 5) For that matter, even Shilpi Verma represented herself like that. For example, she used to wear all white clothes, the traditional dress of Hindu widow and her speeches contained the contents of the circumstances she went through and promise to not let that happen with anybody.

## Chapter 19

- 1) According to some empirical studies, the chief factors governing the population of Scheduled Castes in different parts of the country include: (i) the incidence of conversion from Hinduism to other religions, (ii) the degree of concentration of scheduled tribe population, (iii) the average size of landholdings of the farming communities, (iv) the intensity of agriculture, particularly with reference to inputs like water, capital and labour, (v) the proportion of cropped area under labour intensive crops, (vi) the availability of newly reclaimed or surplus agricultural land for settling Scheduled Caste families, and (vii) the duration and nature of feudal rule. RC Chandna, *Spatial Dimension of Scheduled Castes in India*, New Delhi, Intellectual Publishing House, 1989, pp 20.
- 2) Director of Census Department J&K, Census of India, J&K, Series-2, Paper 1, 2001, pp 55.
- 3) *Ibid.*, pp 57.
- 4) Bashir A Dabla, 'Education and Social Mobility among Scheduled Castes in Jammu', in *J&K Human Rights Perspective*, Vol. 3, no. 2, March-April 2005, pp 6.
- 5) Yog Raj Sharma, *Land Reforms in Jammu and Kashmir: An Unfinished Agenda*, pp 13. Also see, MA Beg, *On the Way to Golden Harvest: Agricultural Reforms*

- in *Kashmir*, 1951; Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Big Landed Estate Abolition Act, 1950; Government of Jammu and Kashmir, J&K Agrarian Reforms Act, 1972; Government of Jammu and Kashmir, J&K Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976; and Government of Jammu and Kashmir, J&K Agrarian Reforms (Amendment) Act, 1978.
- 6) *The Jammu and Kashmir Yearbook of Who's Who-1997*, Jammu, Ranbir Publications, pp section 1-92, 93 and 107.
  - 7) *Ibid.*, pp section 111, 33.
  - 8) SP Sharma, 'Corporation set up to Uplift Weaker Sections has failed miserably', *The Tribune*, 17 August 2006.
  - 9) *Ibid.*
  - 10) Quoted in Denzil Ibbetson, 1916 (Reproduced 1993), *Punjab Castes*, Delhi, Low Price Publications, pp 333.
  - 11) *Ibid.*
  - 12) See, "Memorandum for Amendments of Reservation Rules", submitted to J&K Government by the All India Confederation of SC/ST Organization, J&K, on 16 December 2005.
  - 13) *Ibid.*
  - 14) See, the memorandum submitted to the chief minister by the All India Confederation of SC/ST organization, J&K on 20 March 2006.
  - 15) Ram Prasad Khatana, 'Development and the Process of Sedentarisation among the Gujjars Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir' in Aijazuddin Ahmad (Ed.), 1993, *Social Structure and Regional Development—A Social Geography Perspective*, Jaipur, Rawat Publication, pp 283.

## Chapter 20

- 1) According to PAK Government's facts and figures during 1947-48, a large number of the Muslims from Jammu and Kashmir migrated to Pakistan. According to the official figures, they currently make up around 1.5 million in Pakistan's population

alone. The huge number of these migrants lived in Sialkot, Lahore, Gujarat, Gujranwala, Jhelum and Rawalpindi districts of Punjab province. The next large-scale migration from Jammu and Kashmir took place during and after the 1965 war between India and Pakistan. As a result, large-scale migration occurred from the border districts, especially from Rajouri and Poonch. According to statistics of the PAK Government's Department of Rehabilitation and Relief, around 10,000 families, including approximately 40,000 people, migrated during this period. The PAK Government resettled these refugees in Chhump (1,771 families) and Jhang (7,969 families) in Punjab province. The third wave of migration took place during the 1971 India-Pakistan war. Estimated 10,000 people from border districts entered into Pakistan Administered Kashmir, and, on this occasion, were resettled locally. The last and fourth migration began in 1990 and continues even today. The number of current migrants is over 36,000. For details see Khalid Rahman & Ershad Mahmud, 'Kashmiri Refugees: Facts, Issues and the Future Ahead, Policy Perspective' (*Journal of Institute of Policy Studies*, Islamabad), January 2006.

- 2) Alastair Lamb, 1994, *Birth of a Tragedy: Kashmir 1947*, Hertingfordbury, Roxford Books, pp 60.
- 3) For details see Ershad Mahmud, 'Status of AJ & K in Political Milieu, Policy Perspective', (*Journal of Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad*) July 2006.
- 4) From 1975 onwards, this tradition is faithfully followed by various rulers of Islamabad. Zia-ul-Haq backed Sardar Qayyum Khan to install the MC Government in 1985, while Ms Benazir Bhutto made it possible for Mumtaz Rathore to form his government. Likewise, when Nawaz Sharif came to power, his administration supported Sardar Qayyum to become PM, and subsequently, the PPP Government led by Sultan Mahmood was established by Benazir Bhutto in PAK in 1996. In 2001,



Sikandar Hayyat and Sardar Anwar Khan were handpicked by the military establishment instead of the party. However, it also a reality that people of PAK also support those parties whose prospects seem bright and maintain good relations with Islamabad. Ironically, the federal government always plays gimmicks on 12-refugees' seats spreading all over Pakistan to help its allies to secure a majority. In 2006 elections, President Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister of Pakistan Shaukat Aziz and other top Muslim League leaders clearly backed Sardar Attiq Ahmad Khan-led Muslim Conference.

- 5) For detailed account see Alexander Evans, 'Kashmir: A Tale of Two Valleys', *Asian Affairs*, Vol 36, no. 1, March 2005, pp 35-47.
- 6) According to Ijaz Nabi, a senior World Bank economist, the literacy rate in Pakistan Administered Kashmir is actually 78 per cent. Primary school enrolment is 80 per cent for boys and 74 per cent for girls. However, enrolment rates for higher education are seen to drop sharply, with only 33 per cent of boys and 19 per cent of girls attending high school. The quality of primary education leaves much to be desired because of lack of facilities and trained teachers. Khalid Hasan, *Daily Times*, Lahore, 'Literacy Rate in Azad Jammu and Kashmir soars to 78 per cent, Leaves the Rest of Pakistan Behind', 6 February 2006.
- 7) Following him, several other stalwarts of local politics including former President KH Khurshid also joined it for different reasons. Sardar Ibrahim became president of PAK chapter of it and subsequently contested presidential elections on its platform and made his way to the power circle. The state assembly elections were held in 1975 and PPP emerged as a winner out of it with Abdul Hamid Khan taking over the charge as the prime minister of the state. This was the time around when Sardar Qayyum-led MC joined anti-Bhutto

- alliance in Pakistan and played a significant role in organizing the agitation against the PPP Government. See Prof Dr Sarwar Abbasi, *Siasiyat Kashmir*, Bagh, Azad Kashmir. pp 308-309.
- 8) Prof Dr Sarwar Abbasi, *Siasiyat Kashmir*, Bagh, Azad Kashmir. pp 308-309.
- 9) This can also be gauged from the fact that during his rule in 1970-1975 Sardar Muhammed Abdul Qayyum Khan introduced several Islamic laws and declared Friday as weekly holiday. Likewise, PAK Assembly declared Qadianis' non-Muslim minority in April 1973.
- 10) Syed Mahmood Azad, *Tareek-e-Kashmir*, pp 477, and also see *op. cit.* Yousaf Saraf, pp 1,350-1,351.
- 11) Maqbool Butt, with a colleague Maj Amanullah entered Indian Kashmir to organize the movement militarily in 1968. The two were arrested soon by Indian forces and awarded death penalty. Maqbool Butt escaped and returned home safe. Similarly, in 1971, Hashim Qureshi and Ashraf Qureshi, two members of National Liberation Front (NLF), hijacked the Ganga, an Indian aeroplane and forcedly made it land on Pakistan soil which was later set on fire on Lahore airport. The hijackers were accused of involvement in covert operations for Indian interest which were not proved in court.
- 12) Maqbool Butt entered Indian Kashmir again in 1976.
- 13) Ironically, the elected government could not sustain for long as once again Pakistan Chief of Army Staff General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq (1924-88), dislodged the civilian government in July 1977. He also extended martial law up to Pakistan Administered Kashmir and northern areas and declared it Martial Law Zone E. On October 1978, Sardar Ibrahim Khan was removed from the office through a proclamation issued by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq in his capacity as the chairman of PAK council. He was replaced by a serving Brigadier Muhammad Hayat Khan. He remained in the

- office until 1983 when he was replaced by another retired Major General Abdur Rahman owing to a strong political campaign against him by the local political parties. On the whole, General Hayat's tenure can be considered as an era of development in PAK history. He built a good road network, hospitals and educational institutions. However, local political forces continued their opposition to the government. PPP PAK chapter had to face a lot of hardships and difficulties during Hayyat's regime.
- 14) The elected government under the Act, 1974 remained suspended with effect from August 1977 to 16 June 1985 under the provision of Section 53A of the PAK Constitution. However, the Zia regime announced state election in 1985 but it came with some odd preconditions. Zia's appointee President Major General (r) Abdur Rahman Khan wanted to limit the impact and role of political parties and barred unregistered parties from contesting elections besides cancelling the registration of parties who could not secure more than 12.5 per cent of total votes and less than five per cent valid votes. This was another factor that kept PPP and Jamaat-e-Islami out of elections. The steps were taken in April 1985 when two amendments were promulgated: one in 1984 as Political Parties Ordinance and the other in 1970 as Assembly Elections Ordinance. But this caused a furore among the opposition parties who correctly perceived it as intended to prevent opposition electoral alliances since each of several parties in the opposition would have to run in its own name and field its own candidates in most of the constituencies in order to get the required 12.5 per cent of the votes.
  - 15) The PAK Constitution (Article 53) also gives the federal government the power to dismiss elected government in PAK. This power has only been used twice since 1974. But it gives the federal government a leverage to dictate its terms to the ruling elite of the PAK. The PAK leaders have been demanding the repeal of this article. They are of the opinion that this power should be given to the elected lawmakers.
  - 16) Since 1985, Sikandar and Qayyam Khan did not get on well. It is known fact that Qayyam son's Sardar Attiq was *persona nongrata* during the Sikandar rule in 1985–1990.
  - 17) About 200 officers were recruited in grade 17–18 and 19, during a single week. It is reported that a candidate who had failed to qualify for the post of a Naib Tehsildar (grade 14), was recruited in grade 18 without appearing in any test or interview. AA Salaria, Back-Door Appointments Regularized, *Dawn*, 11 September 1992.
  - 18) He represents the Jar clan of Mirpur and Mirpuri settled in the United Kingdom.
  - 19) AA Salaria, prominent commentator on PAK internal affairs, analyses the situation as following: 'It has virtually been a repeat story of the polls held five years back, In 1991, when the last polls were held, the Muslim League government was in office in Pakistan and, thought the PAK Assembly and cabinet had been disbanded by the PP prime minister, he himself was still in office in PAK. But the Muslim Conference, abetted by the federal government, swept the polls and captured most of the seats, including 11 out of 12 refugee seats in Pakistan'.
  - 20) In 1996, when the next polls were held, the party position had been reversed. The PPP was in the saddle in Pakistan while the Muslim Conference though the PAK prime minister and his cabinet members had been relieved of their responsibilities, was still in the office in PAK. The Chief Election Commissioner and the polling staff were virtually the same as in 1991. Thus except for a topsy-turvy change in the party position, the pattern and the end results were almost identical.
  - 21) In both the cases, the federal government in Pakistan had the last word. The reason is obvious. For all practical purposes,

the PAK government is subservient, both financially and administratively, to the Pakistan government which wields effective powers in the region. Financially, if the flow of recurring grants is delayed or stopped from Islamabad, the PAK government faces bankruptcy. AA Salaria, 'Enigma of AJ&K polls', *Dawn*, 11 July 1996.

- 22) *Op. cit.*
- 23) *Ibid.*
- 24) *Ibid.*
- 25) *The News*, Islamabad, 'Labyrinthine Politics of AJ&K' (editorial), 2 April 1991.
- 26) Following the same line *Dawn* says: 'At a recent Press conference in Karachi he admitted that he had refused to succumb to it because 32 of the 48 members supported him. On Sunday, he sprang a surprise by reversing his stand and advising the dissolution of the assembly—explaining that the he did not wish to tax the patience and loyalty of his coalition partners, who were open to all sorts of temptations and pressures to change sides. *Dawn*, 'AJ&K Assembly Dissolution' (editorial), 2 April 1991.
- 27) *The News*, 'Putting the AJ&K House in Order', 28 April 1991.
- 28) Yousaf Naseem, then convener of APHC AJ&K chapter told me during an interview at his residence on 27 May 2005.
- 29) Most members of the MC Parliamentary Party were taken aback when they were told that a serving Army General was most likely to be their party's presidential candidate. Some of them turned emotional and said that they would not cast their votes if Qayyum was not the party's candidate. Tariq Naqush, *Dawn*. Anwar was serving as Chief of the General Staff at the military's General Headquarters in Rawalpindi. Rules were waived to ease the General's entry into the presidency. He hails from Poonch district of PAK.

- 30) Alexander Evans, A Tale of Two Valleys, *Asian Affairs*, Vol XXXVI, no. 1, March 2005, United Kingdom.
- 31) For full text see *Weekly Kasheer*, Rawalpindi, 9–15 April 1990.
- 32) Mir Abdul Aziz, 'Refusal to Render accounts of 56 Crores', *The Muslim*, 19 September 1996.
- 33) PPP Youth Wing issued a fact file about government performance. See *Daily Jang*, Rawalpindi, 11 May 1998.
- 34) Tariq Naqash, 'Ridiculous Moves', *Dawn*, 22 February 2000.
- 35) *Daily Khabrain* (Islamabad), published detailed statement of Sikander Hayat on this issue on 1 July 1996.
- 36) Mir Abdul Aziz. 'Accountability and AK', *The Muslim*, 15 November 1996.
- 37) *Op. cit.* Mir Abdul Aziz, 'Refusal to Render Accounts of 56 crores'.
- 38) *Ibid.*

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